MARJORIE DEAN

HIGH-SCHOOL SENIOR

by

PAULINE LESTER

MARJORIE DEAN

HIGH SCHOOL SERIES

By Pauline Lester

CLOTH BOUND, COVER DESIGNS IN COLORS

Price 65c Per Volume

MARJORIE DEAN,
HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN.

MARJORIE DEAN,
HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE.

MARJORIE DEAN,
HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR.

MARJORIE DEAN,
HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR.

"WHY, MIGNON, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE HOME FROM SEVERN BEACH! HOW DO YOU DO?"

Marjorie Dean High School Senior.

MARJORIE DEAN
High School Senior

By PAULINE LESTER

AUTHOR OF

"Marjorie Dean, High School Freshman"
"Marjorie Dean, High School Sophomore"
"Marjorie Dean, High School Junior"

A. L. BURT COMPANY
Publishers New York

Copyright, 1917
By A. L. Burt Company

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

CHAPTER I

A PRETENSE OF FRIENDSHIP

"MARJORIE! Marjorie Dean!" The black-eyed girl in the runabout accompanied her high-pitched call by a gradual slowing down of the smart little car she was driving.

The dainty, white-gowned figure on the sidewalk tilted a white parasol over one shoulder and turned a pair of startled brown eyes in the direction of the voice. "Why, Mignon, I didn't know you were home from Severn Beach! How do you do?" Advancing to the runabout, Marjorie Dean stretched forth a white-gloved hand.

"I've been in Sanford since Wednesday," returned Mignon. Leaning out of the runabout, she lightly clasped the proffered fingers. "Get into my car and I'll take you wherever you want to go. I'm glad I saw you. It's been deadly dull in San-

ford with most of the girls still away." Her elfish eyes noting that Marjorie's smart attire betokened a possible luncheon or tea, Mignon was consumed with a lively curiosity to learn the pretty senior's destination. "You look as though you were going to an afternoon tea," she continued artfully. "Say where and I'll ride you there."

"Thank you, but I don't believe I'll ride. I was out in the car all morning with General. It's so lovely this afternoon I'd rather walk. I'm not bound for a tea, though. I am going to make a call."

Mignon's dark brows drew together in a faint frown. "Oh, pshaw!" she exclaimed. "Why not ride? Unless you don't wish me to know where you are going?" she added suspiciously.

"I never thought of that," was Marjorie's honest protest. Yet now that Mignon had mentioned it, it struck Marjorie rather forcibly that she was not specially anxious to reveal her destination. "I am going to call on Miss Archer," she informed her, making an effort to be casual.

"Then I'll take you there. I should like to see her, too," announced Mignon calmly. She had decided that to call on the principal in Marjorie's company would be of great advantage to her. "Come on," she urged.

Too well-bred to exhibit pointed reluctance, Marjorie resigned herself to the inevitable and stepped

into the runabout. Her visit to Miss Archer was of a somewhat personal nature. Still, she reflected, it was nothing very secret, after all. Should her mission prove successful, Mignon would, under any circumstances, soon learn the result.

"How do you know Miss Archer will be at home?" inquired Mignon as she drove slowly down the shady avenue. "I thought she was still in the West."

"She came home only yesterday. I telephoned her," returned Marjorie. "This call of mine is really more like a business appointment. I would rather have waited until she had her house fairly opened again, but I couldn't very well. It might be too late."

"Oh!" Mignon was burning to demand further information, but the finality in Marjorie's tones warned her to go slowly. Between herself and the latter there remained always a curious wall of reserve created by their mental attitude toward each other. Mignon did not believe that Marjorie's friendliness toward herself was sincere. On the other hand, Marjorie sensed the note of unbelief. She felt that Mignon did not trust her and it made her uncomfortable when in the French girl's presence.

It was a comparatively short ride to the spacious, old-fashioned house, set in the midst of giant elms, which the last three generations of Archers had

called home. Of them all Miss Archer and an elder sister alone remained. The two women had arrived in Sanford from a visit to Western relatives on the previous day. Even in that short time the big house had taken on an air of new life. The shuttered windows and boarded-up doors were now open and a hospitable array of comfortable wicker and willow chairs on the wide veranda proclaimed that someone was at home.

"We'll leave the runabout here," decreed Mignon, as they brought up outside the tall iron gate. She alighted from it in her lithe, cat-like manner, her restless eyes fixed on the house. Quite forgetting that she was merely a second party to the call, Mignon motioned impatiently for Marjorie to follow and set off up the walk in her most imposing manner. Divided between amusement and vexation, Marjorie gave a little sigh and stepped quickly after the French girl.

By the time she had reached the veranda, Mignon had rung the door bell. A moment and it was answered by a young woman whose blue bungalow apron and dust cap marked her as maid of all work. "Good afternoon," she said politely. To Marjorie she appeared a trifle embarrassed. "She must be a new maid," was her first thought. "I wonder if Hulda has left the Archers." As a frequent guest at Miss Archer's, Marjorie had always delighted in Hulda, the good-natured Swedish maid. Impul-

sively she asked with a winning smile, "Isn't Hulda here any more?"

"Hulda!" The young woman stared curiously at Marjorie, then replied quickly. "She will be here next week. I am trying to take her place until she comes." A faint flickering smile touched the corners of her red lips as she said this.

"Kindly tell Miss Archer that Miss La Salle and Miss Dean are here" broke in Mignon haughtily. She had already decided that, for a servant, this girl appeared to feel herself above her position. It was partially Marjorie's fault. It was always a mistake to treat a servant as an equal.

The maid favored Mignon with another strange, inscrutable glance. "Miss La Salle and Miss Dean," she repeated. "Please come into the drawing room. I will tell Miss Archer that you are here." Politely ushering them into the long, cool drawing room, the maid obsequiously bowed them to seats and vanished.

"What a pretty girl," was Marjorie's first remark when they were left to themselves. "She had such lovely golden brown hair and big gray eyes."

"I didn't notice. All maids look alike to me," shrugged Mignon. "I thought she was altogether too presuming for a servant."

"I thought she was sweet," came Marjorie's earnest reply. She had taken an instantaneous liking to the new maid. "After all, we're just human

beings, you know, and free and equal. Why, Delia is as much a part of our home as I am."

"It's very unwise to give servants too much liberty," disagreed Mignon loftily. "Every one of ours has to keep his or her place. I see to that. My father is quite apt to let them do as they please. It takes *me* to manage them."

Marjorie felt a strong return of her ancient dislike for Mignon sweep over her. Quickly she conquered it, adroitly turning the conversation into a more pleasant channel. It was at least ten minutes before the maid reappeared in the wide curtained doorway. Announcing that Miss Archer would be with them directly, she nodded almost curtly and disappeared.

"Good afternoon, Marjorie. I am very glad to see you again," was the principal's cordial salutation as she entered the room. "How do you do, Mignon?" Although she gave the French girl her hand, there was an almost imperceptible reserve in her greeting. To her, Mignon's call was as unexpected as her sudden decision to pay it had been to Marjorie. "You must excuse the unsettled appearance of things. We have not yet found time to take the covers off most of the furniture. When we left for the West, I sent Hulda off on a visit to her father and mother. She will not return until next week. Fortunately, my sister and I have Veronica to help us."

"Veronica," repeated Mignon. "That is a queer name for a maid, isn't it?"

"'What's in a name?'" quoted Miss Archer lightly. There was a faint touch of amusement in her quiet tones that nettled Mignon. She concluded that, as she never had liked Miss Archer, she now merely liked her a trifle less.

"As you are so busy, Miss Archer, we must not detain you long. I really ought to apologize for breaking in upon you before you are rested from your long journey, but I had something quite important to ask you. So I thought I had better not wait. This may seem like a very personal question, but—— Have you engaged a secretary for this year?" Marjorie colored faintly at her own temerity.

"No." An expression of annoyance leaped into Miss Archer's fine eyes. "Miss Lansing, as you know, was graduated last June. That leaves her place vacant. I cannot tell you how much I have missed Marcia Arnold. She made an ideal secretary. As I have always selected my secretary from among those of the Sanford High School girls who are anxious to do extra work, I suppose I shall have to attend to it as soon as possible. Were you thinking of applying for the position, Marjorie?" she questioned humorously.

Marjorie laughed. "Oh, no; I am not clever enough. But I know a girl who is. She would

like the position, too. I am speaking of Lucy Warner. She really needs the work, Miss Archer, and I am sure she could do it and keep up in her classes. She is *so* bright."

"Lucy Warner. Ah, yes, I had not thought of her. She is a remarkably bright girl. I imagine she would suit me admirably. She seems extremely capable." Miss Archer appeared signally pleased with the prospect of Lucy as her secretary. "What do you wish me to do, Marjorie? Shall I write her?"

"I shall be ever so glad if you will, Miss Archer." Marjorie spoke as gratefully as though it were she who was the most interested party to the affair. "I am sure she will accept. Thank you for listening to my suggestion."

After a little further exchange of conversation, Marjorie rose to make graceful farewell. Mignon followed suit, a trace of contempt lurking in her black eyes. She had confidently expected that their call would take on a purely social tone. As it was, Marjorie had held the floor, giving her no opportunity to make a favorable impression on Miss Archer. And all for that frumpy, green-eyed Lucy Warner! It was just like Marjorie Dean to interest herself in such dowdy persons.

"And is that what your wonderful business appointment was about?" she asked pettishly as the two girls strolled down the pebbled walk bordered

on each side with clumps of sweet alyssum. "I can't see why you should trouble yourself about a girl like Lucy Warner. She used to hate you. She told me so. I suppose the reason she turned around all of a sudden and began to be nice to you was because she thought you would use your influence with Miss Archer to get her that position. She knows you are Miss Archer's pet."

"I am not Miss Archer's pet." Marjorie's voice quivered with vexation. "She likes ever so many other girls in Sanford High as well as she likes me." Striving hard to regain her composure, she added, "Lucy hasn't the least idea that I tried to get her the secretaryship. I know that at one time she didn't like me. It was a misunderstanding. But it was cleared up long ago."

"What was it about?" queried Mignon, always eager for a bit of gossip to retail at her pleasure. "You must tell me."

"It lies between Lucy and me. I have never told anyone about it. I intend never to tell anyone."

"Oh, I don't care to know." Mignon tossed her head. "I'm sorry now that I bothered myself to call on Miss Archer. I really shouldn't have taken the time. I'll have to drive fast to make up for it."

"Don't let me trouble you," assured Marjorie evenly. "I won't be going back the way we came. I intend to walk on to Gray Gables." By this time

they had passed through the gateway to the runabout.

"As you please," returned Mignon indifferently. "Come over and see me before school opens, if you have time. Better telephone beforehand, though, else I may not be at home when you call."

"Thank you." Not forgetting courtesy, Marjorie added, "The same applies to you in regard to me."

"Thank you. Good-bye," returned Mignon coolly.

"Good-bye." Marjorie turned from the French girl to begin her walk to Gray Gables. "It's no use," she told herself soberly. "We are both pretending to be friendly when really we can never be friends. I ought to feel awfully cross with Mignon. Somehow I feel sorry for her, just as I've always felt toward her. But for her father's sake, he's such a splendid man, I'm going to keep on trying. Poor Mignon. It seems as though she must have started wrong when she was a baby and can never get set right. She may, perhaps, some day, but I'm afraid that some day is a long way off."

CHAPTER II

A HUMBLE SENIOR

"Did you see that latest addition to the senior class?" Mignon La Salle's voice rose in profound disgust as she hurled the question at Jerry Macy, who had entered the senior locker room directly behind her.

"Of course I saw her. I have eyes," reminded Jerry gruffly. "Pretty girl, isn't she?" This last comment was a naughty inspiration on Jerry's part. The French girl's contemptuous tone informed her that the newest senior had already become a mark for ridicule in Mignon's eyes. She, therefore, took a contrary stand.

"*Pretty!*" Mignon's tones rose still higher. "That staring-eyed, white-faced creature! *Your* eyes can't be very keen. She's a servant, too; a *servant.*"

"You can't expect me to see that," retorted Jerry. "All the more credit to her if she is. A girl who has to work for her living, but is smart enough to walk into a strange school and into the senior class is good enough for anybody to know. You're a snob, Mignon, and you ought to be ashamed to say such things." Coolly turning her back on the scowling girl, Jerry busied herself with

her locker. Privately she wondered how Mignon happened to know so much about the newcomer.

Mignon watched her resentfully, longing to say something particularly cutting, but not daring to do so. When it came to an argument, Jerry Macy was capable of more than holding her own. As the seniors were now beginning to arrive in numbers, she had no wish to be publicly worsted. She could not resist saying satirically, however, as Marjorie Dean passed her: "Did you see that servant girl of Miss Archer's in our section this morning?"

"Servant girl?" chorused two or three bystanders, crowding closer to their informant. "What do you mean? Whom do you mean?"

Marjorie's sweet face clouded at the intentional cruelty of Mignon's speech. How could she exhibit such heartlessness toward one whom she hardly knew? "Are you referring to Veronica Browning?" she asked in a clear, decided voice. "I am ever so glad she is going to be in our class. I think she's a dear."

"Veronica Browning," repeated Mignon, laughing. "I wonder how she came by such a high-sounding name. Most servants are satisfied with a common, ordinary one, like Jane or Maggie. It seems to me——"

A little flutter of dismay, which suddenly swept the group of seniors, checked Mignon's caustic remarks. A gray-eyed girl had walked into the

locker room just in time to get the full effect of them. Under heavy masses of golden brown hair her pale face looked out with a sweetly appealing air which made her extremely attractive. In her serviceable gown of plain brown linen, made in simple fashion, she was in wren-like contrast to the more gaily-dressed girls who stood about the locker room.

"How are you, Miss Browning?" greeted Marjorie genially. "I am glad you are going to be a senior. You gave me quite a surprise. Girls, this is Veronica Browning." Marjorie named in turn those of her schoolmates who stood nearest to herself and Veronica. Among them were Jerry, Constance Stevens and Harriet Delaney. The trio greeted her in a far more friendly fashion than was shown by the others.

The newcomer bowed to them pleasantly, her calm face betraying no sign of the unkind speeches she must undoubtedly have overheard. Not troubling herself to greet Veronica, Mignon seized her hat, slammed the door of her locker shut and switched out, followed by several girls who were impatient to learn more of the stranger's history.

"Won't you walk down the street with us, Miss Browning?" asked Jerry. "The rest of our crowd will be here in a minute. Here they come now," she added as Muriel Harding, Irma Linton and

Susan Atwell appeared to the accompaniment of the latter's jolly giggle.

"Thank you. I should like to walk with you," smiled the girl in gentle, well-bred fashion. "I hardly expected to meet any of my classmates so soon. I am lucky, I think."

"It's our duty as good seniors to make you feel at home," asserted Marjorie, proceeding to present the last three arrivals. "Now that you know a few of us, suppose we move on. If Miss Merton happens to come this way she will hear us talking and feel it her duty to scatter us."

Those who have read "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN," "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE," and "MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR," need no special introduction to her and her friends. They already know the many events, happy and unhappy, that transpired during Marjorie's three years at Sanford High School. Transplanted from her home in B——— at the very beginning of her freshman year, to the thriving little city of Sanford, Marjorie took up her school life there with a determination to find and hold fast to all that was finest and highest in it. Despite many trials and misunderstandings which fell to her lot, her resolve to be true to herself never faltered, and each year at high school brought fresh pledges of loyalty from those who had learned to know and love her.

Now, in the first week of her senior year, she was again exerting her kindly influence in behalf of the stranger within her gates.

As the bevy of girls moved through the corridor to the main entrance of the school, she slipped her arm through that of the new girl and said cheerily, "I am sure you will like Sanford High, Miss Browning. I felt quite lost when first I came here. Now I'd be more lost if I had to leave it. Where did you live before you came here?"

"In California," answered Veronica. "I was born there. You know, I suppose, that I came East with—with—Miss—Archer." She hesitated slightly on the last words. "I should like to tell you something," she continued frankly. "I heard what that black-eyed girl was saying about me as I came into the locker room. Of course I wish to be friends with you and these nice girls you go with—but—well, perhaps you ought not to pay too much attention to—one—in my position."

Marjorie gave Veronica's arm a gentle little squeeze. "Now I am sure you don't know us very well. We choose our friends for what they are, not because of social position or any such foolishness. You really mustn't mind Mignon. She has been—well—brought up rather differently from the rest of us. We——" Marjorie stopped in confusion. "There are some things I can't explain," she went on slowly. "It seems rather queer in me

to ask you to like Mignon, but if you will try to think of her as kindly as you can, it will help her a great deal. I'm afraid that's not very clear," she concluded in embarrassment.

"I think I understand," nodded Veronica. A shade of the peculiar smile that Marjorie had noted on first sight of her at Miss Archer's flickered briefly about her mobile lips. "After all, I am here for study. Under the circumstances I can't really expect to take much part in the social side of high school. I have had so many——" She suddenly ceased speaking, with a little catch of breath.

"Oh, you must come to my home to see me and come to my parties, too," put in Marjorie quickly. "I wish you to meet my mother and father. I call them General and Captain. I am a Lieutenant. So is Connie Stevens. We all belong to a little army of our own. It's a game a friend of mine and I used to play when we were little girls and we've never outgrown it."

"How pretty!" The fair, sensitive face of the other girl broke into radiant, smiling beauty.

Marjorie thought her more fascinating than ever when she smiled. "I must tell you a secret," she confided impulsively. "I liked you the minute I saw you at Miss Archer's. I am sure we shall be good friends."

"Here is my hand to seal the bargain," laughed

Veronica. "You have come to mean a great deal to me already. I never thought that——"

"It's not fair in you, Marjorie Dean, to monopolize our brand-new senior," called Jerry Macy. They had now left the school building and were swinging down the street in pairs, Marjorie and Veronica bringing up the rear.

"Come on." Seizing her companion by the arm, Marjorie propelled her forward until they bumped gently into Jerry and Irma, who were just ahead of them. "Here we are," she announced mischievously.

"Such boisterous conduct." Jerry drew down her plump face in imitation of Miss Merton. "I'm not complaining on my own account, but I have to protect Irma from your onslaughts."

"That's the same as saying I need a guardian, Jeremiah," teased Irma. "You know it's really the other way around."

"They are such jolly girls," commented Veronica. "When I was——" She stopped. Abruptly changing the subject she began to remark on the beauty of the huge maples that stood sentinel-like on both sides of the street.

Marjorie agreed rather absently that they were indeed magnificent trees. Inwardly she wondered if Veronica had the habit of so abruptly chopping off her speeches. For all her apparent frankness there was a curious baffling side to her that Mar-

jorie was at a loss to understand. It reminded her of the puzzling way in which Constance Stevens had behaved when first they met. She reflected that perhaps this girl felt the weight of poverty even as Constance had once felt its pressure. On the other hand, Veronica appeared outwardly to accept it with the utmost serenity.

Perhaps the other girl may have glimpsed something of what was going on behind Marjorie's tranquil face. Casting a sidelong glance at her pretty companion, her strange smile lived again, to die in a fleeting instant. "I must leave you here," she said, as they reached a cross street that led to the avenue on which the Archer homestead was situated. "Better think over what I told you. Remember I am Miss Archer's 'servant girl.'" She laughed musically as though she rather enjoyed thus reminding Marjorie of her humble status.

"You are my friend," responded Marjorie gravely. "Please remember that. Good-bye. We'll see each other again this afternoon."

Nodding a smiling farewell to Marjorie and the others, Veronica Browning left them and hurried on toward home.

"Do you suppose she has to help with the luncheon?" asked Jerry, her round eyes fastened on Veronica's rapidly retreating back.

"She'd hardly have time to do much work at noon," declared Irma. "I don't imagine she would

be asked to do that. It's splendid in Miss Archer to take a young girl like that to work for her and allow her to go to school."

"Just who is she, Marjorie?" quizzed Jerry. "How did you and Mignon happen to get acquainted with her before school opened? Where did Mignon get all her information? She ought to be ashamed of herself for saying what she said before the girls. It's lucky that we were there to help out."

Quite willing to satisfy Jerry's curiosity regarding the whys and wherefores of the new senior, Marjorie related the incidents pertaining to her call on the principal, ending with "The very first moment I saw her, I liked her. Of course I feel very kindly toward the different maids in you girls' homes. But I feel differently toward Veronica. I suppose it is because she's so sweet and pretty and about the same age as the rest of us. I'm glad she's going to be a pupil at Sanford High. I know I needn't ask you girls to be nice to her. I can see that all of you like her already."

A chorus of hearty affirmatives went up from the six girls who had halted in the middle of the sidewalk to gather about Marjorie.

"She's a *nice* girl." Jerry placed the stamp of her emphatic approval upon the senior who had just left them. "But she is going to have troubles of her own with Mignon. You mustn't forget

that a number of girls besides ourselves were in the locker room and heard Mignon sneering about Veronica. I'm going to begin calling her Veronica. You know what that means. If I come to like her a good deal, I've already thought of a nice little pet name for her."

Jerry's cheerful grin went the rounds of her friends' faces. It was a well-known fact among them that the stout girl never addressed a schoolmate as "Miss" unless she entertained a lively dislike for her.

"Everyone of us will stand by Veronica. That means she will have seven staunch supporters at least," broke in Constance Stevens, her blue eyes purposeful. "That is really all we need care about. Besides, I don't believe many of the seniors will snub her. If they do, they'll be very sly about it. The fact that she lives at Miss Archer's will make a good impression on most of the girls. If a few girls in Sanford High are hateful to her because she is working her way through school, I don't imagine she will care very much."

"I think you are right, Connie," nodded Marjorie. "Veronica told me that she didn't expect to see much of the social side of high school life. I suppose she feels that she ought to make the most of the chance to study and go to school."

"How did she happen to come here, I wonder?" mused Jerry. "You said, Marjorie, that she said

she'd lived in the state of California. I suppose she must have stayed with Miss Archer's relatives and worked her way through the first three years of high school while she lived with them."

"I suppose so," agreed Marjorie. As she answered Jerry it suddenly flashed across her that during their talk Veronica had, after all, revealed very little about herself. Her attitude had been toward concealment rather than revelation.

"She'll probably tell us more about herself when we get better acquainted with her," suggested gentle Irma.

"If she doesn't, then Jerry will have to take the trail and find out," teased Muriel Harding.

"I can——" Jerry stopped speaking as her glance met Marjorie's. In the latter's brown eyes lurked a mute protest against Muriel's proposal. No one read it there except shrewd Jerry. The abrupt halt in her speech signified her respect for it.

"You can do what?" asked Harriet Delaney, laughing.

"I can mind my own business," evaded Jerry with a broad smile at Muriel which robbed her brusque comment of any implied rebuke. "Let Veronica Browning give out her own information. If I'm going to trail anyone, I choose to shadow Mignon and see that she doesn't make things hard for this new girl."

"Let us all solemnly agree to stand by her," proposed Marjorie impulsively. "By that I don't mean that we are to forget our promise to Mignon's father. We must try somehow to help them both."

After her chums had left her at her own gate, she wondered rather soberly as she went slowly up the walk to the house, how the difficult measure she had so strongly advocated could be carried out.

CHAPTER III

MISSING: A LETTER

When Marjorie returned to school that afternoon, her eyes widened in startled surprise as they became riveted on a square white envelope on her desk addressed to herself. For an instant her heart sank. Then she laughed softly, under her breath, as she recalled that although the script was unmistakably that of the Observer, she now had no need to dread it. The Observer had been laid to rest on a certain snowy afternoon of last winter. This note was from Lucy Warner, her friend.

Opening it, a quick light of pleasure dawned in her face as she read:

"DEAR MARJORIE:

"How can I ever thank you enough for what

you have done for me? Miss Archer sent for me to come to her office this morning and, of course, you know why. I was so surprised and delighted. To be her secretary is a great honor, I think. Then, too, the salary, which is ten dollars a week, will help mother and me so much. I have almost enough credits now to graduate, for I have always carried six studies and taken the special reading courses, too. Now I am going to take only two studies each term. That will give me almost all my time free for secretarial work. I am going to rent a typewriting machine and study stenography by myself, so I shall soon be ready to do Miss Archer's work in creditable fashion.

"Although I've never said a word to anyone about it, I have always wished for the position I now have. One reason, of course, is the salary; the other the experience. When school closes I can take an office position in Sanford, and by working hard save a little money toward some day going to college. It will take a long time, but I am determined to do it. If I can earn enough money to pay my tuition fees, then perhaps I can obtain secretarial work in whatever college I decide to go to. I only wish I had a chance to try for a scholarship. Doesn't it seem strange that Sanford High School doesn't offer at least one? Perhaps if it did,

I could not win it, so there is no use in sighing over it.

"I hope you won't be bored over this long letter. I know it has nothing in it but my own affairs, but, somehow, since that winter day when you forgave me for having been the hateful Observer I feel very near to you, and I wish you to know my ambitions for the future. You are so splendid and honorable that I know I can freely trust you with my confidence. Mother and I would be very pleased to have you come home from school with me some evening soon and take supper with us.

"Gratefully, your friend,

"Lucy Warner."

Marjorie experienced a delightful glow of satisfaction as she finished the letter. How glad she was that Lucy and she now understood each other so fully, and what a clever girl Lucy was. Marjorie was lost in admiration of the quiet little senior's brilliancy as a student. She wished she could help make Lucy's dream of going to college come true as soon as her high school days were over. She knew that Lucy was too proud and sensitive to accept from anyone the money to continue her education. Yet Marjorie determined then that if ever she could become the means of helping to realize the other girl's ambition, she would be happy.

A tender little smile lingered on her lips as she returned the letter to its envelope and tucked it inside her blouse. Very reluctantly she reached for her Cicero and was soon lost in preparing for her next hour's recitation. Marjorie had not been able to arrange her senior program so as to have the coveted last hour in the afternoon for study. In the morning Advanced English and French Prose and Poetry took up the first two periods, leaving her the last one free. After luncheon the first afternoon period was now devoted to study. During the next she recited in Cicero and the third and last period was given over to a recitation in Greek and Roman History. As she had already gained the required amount of credits in mathematics, she was satisfied to forego trigonometry. She was not fond of mathematics and had decided not to burden her senior year with the further study of them. Once in college she knew she would have her fill of trigonometry.

"I've something to report, Captain," was her gay sally as, school over for the day, she tripped into the living room. "I've the dearest letter from Lucy Warner. I'm going to sit right down and read it to you. I found it waiting for me on my desk when I went back to school this afternoon. For just a minute it made me feel queerly. You can understand why. But it was very different from—well, you know." Marjorie unpinned her pretty white

hemp hat and hastily depositing it on the library table, plumped down on the floor at her mother's knee. Dignified senior though she had now become, she had not outgrown her love for that lowly but most confidential resting place.

"That is pleasant news." Mrs. Dean glanced affectionately down at her daughter, who was busily engaged in exploring the folds of her silk blouse for the letter.

"Why!" A frightened look overspread Marjorie's lately radiant face. "Why, it's *gone!* Oh, Captain, I've lost it!"

"Perhaps it has slipped to the back of your blouse, dear." Mrs. Dean became the acme of maternal solicitude. "Unfasten your blouse and look carefully."

Ready to cry, Marjorie sprang to her feet and obeyed the instruction, but the missing letter was not forthcoming. "How could I have lost it," she mourned despairingly. "I always tuck my letters inside my blouse. But I've never lost one before to-day."

"I don't like to pile up misery, Lieutenant, but that seems to me a rather careless practice," commented her mother. "I am truly sorry for you. Perhaps you left it in school instead of putting it inside your blouse."

Marjorie shook a dejected head. "No; I didn't. I wish now that I had. I know I put it inside my

blouse. I was anxious to bring it home and show it to you. I would feel worried about losing any letter that had been written me, but this is a great deal worse. It was a very confidential letter. In it Lucy spoke of—of—last winter and of her plans for the future. Suppose someone were to find it who didn't like her very well? The person who found it might gossip about it. That would be dreadful. Of course, anyone who finds it can see by the address that it is my letter. I think most of the girls would be honorable enough to give it back. A few of them perhaps wouldn't. None of the four juniors who were on the sophomore basket-ball team last year like me very well. And there's Mignon, too. I wouldn't say so to anyone but you, Captain, but I'm not quite sure what she might do."

"No, my dear, I am afraid you can never trust Mignon La Salle very far." Mrs. Dean grew grave. "I made up my mind to that the day your girl friends were here at that little party you gave while you were sick. If ever a girl's eyes spelled treachery, Mignon's showed it that afternoon. Several times I have intended mentioning it to you. You know, however, that I do not like to interfere in your school affairs. Then, too, since her father so depends on your help and that of your girl chums, it seems hardly right in me to wish that you might be entirely free from her companionhip. Yet, at heart, I am not particularly in favor of your as-

sociation with her. Sooner or later you will find yourself in the thick of some disagreeable affair for which she is responsible."

"I am always a little bit afraid of that, too," was Marjorie's dispirited answer. "I try not to think so, though. But it's like trying to walk across a slippery log without falling off. Mignon is so—so —different from the rest of us. You know I told you of the things she said about that nice girl who works for Miss Archer and her sister. Well, the girl came to school to-day. Her name is Veronica Browning and she's a senior."

Marjorie went on to tell her captain of the locker-room incident, and the walk home from luncheon, ending with: "She is awfully dear and sweet. We are friends already. I may invite her to come and see us, mayn't I, Captain?"

"By all means," came the prompt response. "I am very glad, Lieutenant, that you have no false pride. It is contemptible. You may invite your new friend here as soon as you like. No doubt when I see Miss Archer she will tell me more of her protegé of her own accord. Judging from what you say of her, she seems to be a rather mysterious young person."

"She acts a little as Connie used to act before I knew her well," declared Marjorie. "She has the same fashion of starting to say something and then stopping short. I think it is only because she is quite

poor. But she desn't seem to mind it as Connie did. She just smiles about it."

"A young philosopher," commented Mrs. Dean, her eyes twinkling. "I shall look forward to knowing her."

"Oh, you will surely like Veronica," Marjorie confidently predicted. The next instant her face fell. "Oh, dear," she sighed, as fresh recollection of her loss smote her, "what shall I do about that letter? I'll simply have to tell Lucy that I lost it. She's so peculiar, too. I am afraid she won't like it."

"Don't put off telling her," counseled Mrs. Dean. "It is right that you should. Perhaps when you go to school to-morrow morning, you may find that some one of your friends has picked it up. I sincerely hope so, for your sake, Lieutenant."

"Thank you, Captain." Marjorie brightened a trifle. "I am going to hope as hard as ever I can that I'll have it back by to-morrow."

Marjorie's earnest wish that the lost letter might be returned to her the next morning met with unfulfillment. Anxious inquiry among her close friends revealed no clue to the whereabouts of the missing letter. Nor, during the long day which anxiety made longer, did any of her schoolmates seek her with the joyful news, "Here is a letter I found, Marjorie, which is addressed to you."

At the close of the afternoon session, which had lagged interminably, Marjorie turned slow steps to-

ward Miss Archer's big living-room office where Lucy Warner now claimed the secretary's desk.

"Why, Marjorie, I was just thinking of you!" Lucy's bluish-green eyes lighted with pleasure as Marjorie approached her desk. "I was hoping you'd run up soon to see me. I am so glad my hope came true." Her hand went out to Marjorie in cordial greeting.

"I am ever so glad to have a chance to talk to you," returned Marjorie earnestly as she took Lucy's hand. "I received your letter. It was splendid. I loved every line of it. I—but I am afraid you won't feel so glad that I came when I tell you what I've done." A quick flush dyed Marjorie's cheeks.

"I guess it is nothing very dreadful." Lucy smiled her utmost faith in her pretty visitor.

"Lucy, I—well—I hate to tell you, but I've *lost* that letter you wrote me." Marjorie looked the picture of anxiety as she made the disagreeable confession.

"You've *lost* it!" gasped Lucy, her heavy dark brows meeting in the old ominous frown.

"Yes. I tucked it inside my blouse," went on Marjorie bravely, "and when I reached home it was gone."

Lucy's green eyes fastened themselves on Marjorie in an angry stare. For a moment her great liking for the gentle girl was swallowed up in wrath at her carelessness. Intensely methodical, Lucy

found such carelessness hard to excuse. Remembering tardily how much she owed Marjorie, she made a valiant effort to suppress her anger. "It's too bad," she muttered. "I—you see—I gave you my confidence. I wouldn't care to have anyone else know all that I wrote you."

"Don't I know that?" Marjorie asked almost piteously. "I can't begin to tell you how dreadfully I feel about it. I know you think it careless in me to have tucked it inside my blouse. It *was* careless. I've waited all day, thinking someone who might have found it would return it. My name on the envelope ought to insure a prompt return if I dropped it in or near the school building. But if I lost it in the street and a stranger found it, then I'm afraid I wouldn't stand much chance of getting it again." Marjorie made a little gesture of hopelessness. "You must know how humiliated I feel over it. But that won't bring the letter back," she concluded with deep dejection.

During this long apology Lucy's probing eyes had been riveted unblinkingly on Marjorie, as though in an effort to plumb the precise degree of the latter's regret for the accident. "Don't worry about it any more," she said rather brusquely. "It may not amount to anything after all. If you dropped it in the street, the wind may have blown it away; then no one would ever see it. If you dropped it in the school building, it may be returned to you, or per-

haps to me. My full name was signed at the end of it. It has taught me a lesson, though."

Within herself Lucy knew that this last speech bordered on the unkind. Yet she could not resist making it. Although she was earnestly endeavoring to live up to the new line of conduct which she had laid down for herself on the day when she had confessed her fault to Marjorie, much of her former antagonistic attitude toward life still remained. Having, for years, cultivated a spirit of envy and bitterness, she was still more ready to blame than condone. A kind of fierce, new-born gratitude and loyalty toward Marjorie transcended momentarily her personal displeasure. It was not quite powerful enough, however, to check that one caustic remark. She had not yet learned the true secret of gratitude.

"I can't blame you for feeling that I am not a safe confidant," Marjorie made honest reply. "Still it hurts me to hear it. I must go now, Lucy. The girls are waiting for me outside. We are all going down to Sargent's for ice cream. I'd love to have you come, too, if you are through with your work and would care to join us."

"Thank you, but I shall be busy here for the next half hour," Lucy returned, a tinge of stiffness in the reply. She wondered how Marjorie could thus so easily dismiss the annoying matter of the lost letter. Perhaps, after all, she was not half so sorry as she pretended to be.

"Please don't think that I am trying to make light of my misdeed," Marjorie said eagerly. Lucy's curt refusal of the invitation bore a hint of offended pride. "I shall have that letter on my mind all the time until we learn what has become of it, or are sure that it hasn't fallen into unfriendly hands."

At the words "unfriendly hands" Lucy's heavy brows again met. She mentally saw herself held up as an object for ridicule by some unknown person whom the letter might apprise of her secret ambitions. "That's just the trouble," she flashed forth sharply. "Hardly any of the girls at Sanford High understand me in the least. I am sure some of them would be only too glad for an opportunity to make fun of me. It wouldn't be very pleasant for me if some morning I should walk into school and find that about half the girls here knew all about my personal business. You know, as well as I, how fast news travels among a lot of girls."

"I understand—all—that—perfectly." There was a faint catch in Marjorie's clear utterance. "I can only say again that I am very, very sorry for my carelessness."

"That won't bring back my letter," was the testy retort. "But never mind. Let's not say anything more about it." With a little shrug her green eyes sought the pile of papers on her desk.

Marjorie immediately took it as a sign that Lucy

did not wish to talk further to her. Not angry, but distinctly hurt, she did not try to prolong the conversation but merely said: "Good-bye, Lucy. If I hear anything about the letter I will let you know at once." Then she quietly left the office, trying not to blame Lucy for being so austere regarding the lost letter. Yet Marjorie was too human not to feel that having once freely forgiven Lucy of a far greater fault, she had expected to receive a certain amount of clemency in return, which the peculiar, self-contained senior had not offered.

CHAPTER IV

LAYING A CORNERSTONE

"WELL, how about it?" challenged the irrepressible Jerry Macy. Marjorie joined the stout girl and Constance, who stood waiting for her across the street from the high school. Both friends knew why Marjorie had lingered in the school building when the afternoon session was over. They were among the first to whom she confided the news of yesterday's loss. She had announced to them her intention of apprising Lucy Warner of the unpleasant fact, and Jerry in particular was curious to know what effect the disclosure would have upon Lucy.

"I'm glad *that's* over." Marjorie gave a little sigh. "It was pretty hard for me to tell Lucy. It served me right for being so careless, though."

"What did she say? Was she mad?" Curiosity looked forth from Jerry's round face.

"No; that is, not exactly. Still, she wasn't very well pleased," admitted Marjorie. "I hope someone finds the letter yet and brings it to me. But where are the rest of the girls?" She decided that a change of subject was in order. Lucy's too-evident umbrage had hurt her considerably. She therefore preferred to try to forget it for a time at least.

"They've gone on ahead," informed Constance. "Muriel had an errand to do in town and so had Susan. Irma and Harriet went with them. They are to meet us at Sargent's at four-thirty."

"Then we had better be starting for there." Marjorie consulted her wrist watch. "It's ten after four now. Let's hurry along. Did either of you have a chance to talk with Veronica after school?" she continued as they set off for Sargent's three abreast.

"I saw her for a moment in the locker room," replied Constance. "She seemed to be in quite a hurry. She smiled at me but didn't say anything. Then she put on her hat and left the locker room without stopping to talk to any of us."

"I suppose she has to go straight home from school and help Miss Archer's sister," surmised Jerry.

"I'd hate to have to study all day and then go home and shell peas or scrub floors or answer the door-bell or do whatever had to be done. I guess we ought to be thankful that we don't have to earn our board and keep."

"I ought to be doubly thankful" agreed Constance seriously. "Not so very far back in my life I had no time to play, either. Every once in a while when I feel specially self-satisfied, I take a walk past the little gray house where I used to live before my aunt played fairy god-mother to all of us. It makes me remember that my good fortune was just a lucky accident and takes all the conceit out of me."

"Now that we are seniors I believe we ought to make it our business to do all we can for the girls in school who aren't able to have the good times we do," stated Marjorie soberly. "It seems to me that we might band ourselves together into some sort of welfare club. If we do well with it we can pass it on to the next senior class when we have been graduated from Sartoris High."

"Hurrah!" Jerry waved a plump hand on high. "That's the talk. Every since last year I've had that club idea on my mind. Let's hurry up and organize it at once. For that matter we can do it this afternoon; the minute we meet the girls at Sargent's. There will be seven of us to start with. Then we can decide on how many more girls we'd like to have in it."

"Oh, splendid!" exclaimed Marjorie, the sober expression vanishing from her pretty face. "Once we organize a club and get it well started, who knows what distinguished members we may become."

As the three girls swung blithely along toward Sargent's the incessant flow of conversation that went on among them betokened their signal interest and enthusiasm in the new project.

"Here we are," proclaimed Jerry noisily to the quartette of girls seated at a rear table in the smart little shop. "Strictly on time, too, or rather five minutes ahead of it. How long have you been here?"

"Oh, we just came." It was Muriel Harding who answered. "Maybe we didn't hustle our errands through, though. Sit down and we'll order our ice cream. Then we can talk."

"The time has come, the walrus said,
To talk of many things,"

quoted Jerry mysteriously as she seated herself.

"Well, Walrus, what's on your mind?" giggled Susan Atwell, promptly applying Jerry's quotation to the stout girl herself.

"I'm no walrus. I don't consider that I resemble one in the least," retorted Jerry good-humoredly. "I'm sorry you don't recognize a quotation when you hear one. But I forgive you, giggling Susan."

The approach of a white-clad youth to take their

order interrupted Jerry's discourse. The instant the order had been given she continued: "Girls, as I just said, the time has come."

"For what?" demanded Harriet, smiling.

"Marjorie will answer that. She's the real promoter of the enterprise. I am merely the press agent. Go ahead, little Faithful."

Marjorie's cheeks grew rosy at the broadly-implied compliment. "You're a goose, Jerry," she affectionately chided. "You tell the girls about it."

"I'd rather be a goose than a walrus," grinned Jerry. "As for telling; let Marjorie do it. No; I mean, I'd rather you'd spring it on them. Oh, what's the use? Slang and I are one." Jerry sighed an exaggerated sorrow over her vain effort at eliminating inelegant English from her vocabulary.

"It must be something very important," put in Susan, with a derisive chuckle, "or Jeremiah would *never* resort to slang."

Jerry's grin merely widened. "Go ahead and tell them, Marjorie. Hurry up."

"It's just this way, children." Marjorie leaned forward a trifle, her brown eyes roving over the little group of eager-faced listeners. "For a long time Jerry and I have had the idea of forming a club. We talked of it last year, after Christmas, and again after we gave the operetta. But you know what a hard year we had over basketball, and then so many of us became sick that somehow the club idea was

put away and forgotten. But now, as Jerry says, 'the time has come.' What we'd like to do is to form a club from a certain number of girls in the senior class. It mustn't be just a social affair but one devoted to the purpose of looking out for anyone that needs our help. Of course when first we start we won't be able to do much. Later we may find it in our power to do a good deal."

"And if the club's a success," interposed Jerry, "Marjorie thinks it would be nice to pass it along, name and all, to the next senior class. Then they could will it to the next and so on. It would be a sorority, only I hope you won't go and burden it with a Greek letter name. We ought to give it a name that would mean a lot to anyone who happens to hear of it." Despite her insistence that Marjorie should put forward the project, Jerry could not resist having her say, too.

"That's a fine idea," glowed Harriet Delaney. "How many girls ought we to have in it?"

"I should think ten or twelve would be enough to start with," returned Marjorie meditatively. "If we decide later that we need more we can have the pleasure of initiating them. Has anyone of you a pencil and paper?"

Muriel immediately brought forth a notebook from her leather school bag. Susan Atwell promptly produced the required pencil.

"Write on the back page of it, Marjorie," directed

Muriel. "If you put down our illustrious names anywhere else in the book, I am likely to mix them with my zoology notes."

"Imagine Muriel standing up in class and innocently reading: 'To the Crustacean family belong Jerry Macy, Marjorie Dean, Harriet Delaney, etc.,' " giggled Susan Atwell. Whereupon a ripple of giggles swept the zealous organizers.

"Let me see." Turning obediently to the last leaf of the notebook Marjorie glanced about the circle and began to write. "We are seven," she commented after a moment. "Now for the others. Esther Lind, Rita Talbot and Daisy Griggs, of course. That makes ten. I'd like to ask Lucy Warner. Have you any objections?" Marjorie had resolved to overlook Lucy's recent cavalier treatment of herself.

No one objected and Lucy's name went down on the list.

"We ought to ask Veronica," reminded thoughtful Constance.

"Of course." Marjorie jotted down their new friend's name. Suddenly she raised her eyes, a faint frown touching her smooth forehead. "Girls," she said slowly, "it's our duty to ask Mignon La Salle to join the club."

"I knew it!" exclaimed Jerry disgustedly. "I've been expecting to hear you say that. Must we always have *her* tied to our apron strings?"

"Oh, I wouldn't ask her, Marjorie." Muriel's face registered plain disapproval. "If you do, we won't have a peaceful minute. Besides, she would be the thirteenth member."

"I'd hate to belong to a thirteen-member club," declared Harriet superstitiously. "We'd never have a minute's luck."

"We'll never have even that much luck if we drag Mignon into our club," was Jerry's gruff prediction.

Marjorie's troubled gaze strayed from one to another of her schoolmates. Constance and Irma alone looked tranquil. She read strong opposition in the faces of the others.

"I am perfectly willing that Mignon shall become a member of the club." Constance ranged herself boldly on Marjorie's side.

"So am I," reinforced Irma. "We all gave Marjorie our promise to help Mignon in any way that we could. I won't go back on my part of it."

"If you put it that way, neither ought the rest of us," grumbled Muriel. "Still, we have the welfare of the club to consider. Mignon is, and always has been, a disturber. Just at present she is pretending to behave herself because her father has taken her in hand. The hateful way she has acted about Veronica shows very plainly that she hasn't really reformed. If Rowena Farnham hadn't left Sanford

High, she and Mignon would be as chummy as ever by this time."

"I said that same thing to Marjorie last year," confessed Constance. "I am perfectly willing to admit it. Even so, that has nothing to do with our agreement to try to help Mignon. If Rowena were here, and she and Mignon began to go around together again, it would be our duty to look out for Mignon just the same, or else go frankly to Mr. La Salle and ask him to release us from our promise."

"I'd rather do that than have Mignon in our club," asserted Jerry stubbornly. "As long as you've mentioned Rowena I'll tell you something that I've been keeping to myself. You know that the La Salles always go to Severn Beach for the summer, and so does our family. Last year the Farnhams were there, too. But this year they were at Tanglewood. It's not more than ten miles from Severn Beach.

"Twice, while Hal and I were motoring through Tanglewood in his roadster, we saw Mignon and Rowena together. Once, in their bathing suits on the beach, and another time we saw them walking together in a little grove about a mile above Tanglewood. They didn't see us either time. I know perfectly well that Mignon slipped away to visit Rowena without permission. It proves that they can't be kept apart. I understand that Rowena went away

to boarding school last week. That means the two will correspond. Rowena will do her best to bother Marjorie through Mignon. She will never forgive her for last year. All I have to say is that in order to protect Marjorie from her spite we ought to keep Mignon out of the club. We can try to help her in other ways."

"That settles it!" exclaimed Muriel Harding. "I mean that I think Jerry's reason for not asking Mignon to join the club is a good one. Every year of high school, so far, she has managed to make things hard for Marjorie. Now it's time to put a stop to her mischief-making."

"I agree with Muriel," announced Harriet.

"So do I," chimed in Susan.

Marjorie smiled a trifle wistfully. "The majority rules," she said slowly. "It's a case of four against three. I hardly know what to do. If I say that I won't join the club, after being the one to propose it, it will appear that I am backing out just because I can't have my own way. If I say, 'very well, let us organize the club and leave Mignon out,' then I shall be breaking my word to Mr. La Salle.

"I have never yet broken a promise I made. I should hate now to feel that I had failed to be true to myself. Please don't think that I am asking you girls to accept my views. You must do whatever you feel to be best. For me it means one of two

evils: refuse to join the club or break my promise. To do either would make me feel dreadfully."

As Marjorie finished blank silence reigned. It was Jerry Macy who broke it. "You've set us a pretty stiff example to live up to, Marjorie," she said bluntly. "You haven't left us a foot to stand on. We all gave you our word to help Mignon. As long as you think that this is one of the ways we can help her then it must be so. We want you in the club and we want you to keep your promise to Mr. La Salle. But I've just one thing to say. I've said it before and I say it again. If after she joins the club she starts to make mischief for you or any of us, I'll resign. If I do, you needn't try to coax me back for I sha'n't come. Remember that."

"Thank you, Jerry, for being so splendid." Marjorie's slender hand reached out to Jerry in token of her gratitude. "I know that all of you would like me to be in the club. That is why it was so hard for me to say what I just said."

"Here's my hand, too." Muriel flushed as she proffered it. "Susan and Harriet, you are beaten. Salute the victor. I agree with Jerry, though, about resigning from the club."

"I'll risk both of you," declared Marjorie happily, as she shook hands with the three girls. "Thank you ever so much. I didn't say so before, because I was afraid you might think that I was trying to influence you, but don't you see that Mignon needs

us now more than ever? We must try to win her away from Rowena's hurtful influence over her. For her to join the club may be the very best way to do it. If we can interest her in whatever we may decide to do for others, she will, perhaps, care more for us and less for Rowena."

"I guess there's something in that," nodded Jerry. "But what are we going to do about Mignon being the thirteenth member?"

"We had better add one more name to the list," suggested Irma. "Why not ask Florence Johnston? She is such a nice girl."

Concerted assent greeted Irma's suggestion, and Marjorie duly inscribed Florence's name below Mignon's.

"We might as well make it fifteen," asserted Jerry. "Gertrude Aldine is a worthy senior. How about her?"

Jerry's choice approved, Marjorie read down the list as she had compiled it. "That much is settled," she declared. "The next thing is to choose a name. Suppose we think hard about it while we eat our ice cream. When we've finished, then each one must tell the name she has thought of. Out of seven names we ought to find one that will suit our club."

In the interest of deciding upon the club members, for once Sargent's toothsome concoctions had stood neglected on the table. The girls now proceeded to

make up for lost time and an unusual stillness settled down upon them as they ate their ice cream.

Quick-witted Jerry was the first to make the announcement, "I've thought of one."

Inspiration did not come so easily to the others, however.

"I can never think of anything like that on the spur of the moment," lamented Harriet. "The only thing that sticks in my brain is 'The Serious Sanford Seniors,' which is awful."

"Mine is even worse," snickered Susan Atwell. "All I can think of is 'The Happy Hustlers.'"

"Mine's 'The Ever Ready Club,'" smiled Irma. "But that's not an interesting name."

"It wouldn't be a bad name for us," praised Marjorie. "I thought of *'Bon Aventure,'* but it really ought to be a good plain English name, instead of a French one."

"*'Bon Aventure'* sounds very pretty," asserted Constance. "Mine is 'The Searchlight Club.'"

"That's good!" came from two or three of the circle.

"My naming faculty isn't working," was Muriel's rueful cry. "I can't think of a single thing. Go ahead and tell us yours, Jerry. I know you are anxious to."

"When first it came to me, it seemed pretty good, but I like the other names just as well. What I thought of was the 'Lookout Club.' You see that is

what we are going to pledge ourselves to do. We must look out for others who need our help."

"I like that name," was Marjorie's opinion. "It's short and plain, yet it means so much. Every time we heard it or said it or even thought about it, it would make us remember our object. Those in favor of the 'Lookout Club' raise your right hand."

Seven right hands promptly went up. And although they could not then know it, they laid the cornerstone that afternoon for a famous high school sorority that was destined to flourish and endure long after their Sanford High School days had become but a dear memory.

CHAPTER V

THE HARD ROAD OF DUTY

"But why won't you join our club, Veronica?" Marjorie's voice held a pleading note. "We have been counting on you from the first. Of course I know you haven't as much time to yourself as the rest of us have. Still, I am sure Miss Archer would let you come to some of our meetings, if not all of them. We are going to meet once a week at the homes of the different girls and in the evening after dinner."

"I am sorry, Marjorie, but really I can't. For your sake I'd love to, but I am sure it would be best for me not to join your club." Veronica's pretty, pale features took on a faint tinge of pink as she delivered her quiet ultimatum.

"Is it because of Mignon La Salle?" It was Marjorie's turn to color as she asked this pertinent question. Since the first day of school when Veronica had chanced to overhear Mignon's unkind criticism of herself, and Marjorie had rather lamely asked the former not to judge the French girl too harshly, Mignon's name had never again been mentioned between them. From Jerry Macy, however, and various others, Marjorie had learned that Mignon never lost an opportunity to pass sneering remarks about "that servant girl." Marjorie wondered now if at least a part of these remarks had come to Veronica's ears. If such were the case she could hardly blame her new friend for refusing to belong to a club of which Mignon was to be a member.

For a moment Veronica did not answer. Her brief, mysterious smile flickered into evidence, then faded as she said frankly: "Yes, it is because of Miss La Salle. Understand, I am not afraid of her sneers. She is a very vain, foolish young person. It is because——" She broke off abruptly to launch forth unexpectedly with: "You remember my first day at school, when you and I walked home together?"

"Yes," came Marjorie's ready answer. Her eyes sought the other girl's face in mute question.

"You spoke to me then of Miss La Salle, and I said I understood. Since then I've wondered a good deal whether or not I did understand you. When you and she came to call on Miss Archer that afternoon, I may say frankly that I liked you on sight and disliked her intensely. I supposed, however, that there must be some good in her or you wouldn't be her friend. Then, too, when she sneered about me in the locker room and afterward, you asked me to think as kindly of her as I could, I still supposed that you must like her very much. Now comes the curious part. I've been at Sanford High only a week, but in that time I've managed to see and hear a great deal; enough, at any rate, to convince me that Miss La Salle is not nor never has been your friend. What I can't understand is why a delightful girl like you should trouble your head over the welfare of such an ingrate."

Marjorie's face registered patent surprise at gentle Veronica's energetic denunciation of Mignon. She realized that the flash in the former's gray eyes betokened an anger that had been wakened in Veronica's heart solely on her account.

"Why do you and your friends pay any attention to her?" continued Veronica warmly. "My—Miss Archer has told me a number of things that make me wonder at it. Of course, this is in strict confi-

dence, but she was very much surprised to see Miss La Salle with you on the day you called at our—her house."

"I knew she would be," was Marjorie's rueful reply, "but on that day it was merely that she happened along in her runabout and—well—and just came with me. Miss Archer doesn't know——" Marjorie stopped. She had been on the verge of mentioning to Veronica her promise to Mr. La Salle. More than once, since that day in her general's office when Mignon's father had pleaded with her for his daughter's sake, Marjorie had wished that she had never been asked to make that fateful promise.

"Doesn't know what?" interrogated Veronica with the same energetic impatience that had characterized her blunt arraignment of the French girl.

"Veronica," Marjorie began solemnly, "I think, as long as we are already such good friends, that I ought to tell you about Mignon. It's not fair to you or myself or my friends to allow you to think that we approve of some of the things she does and says." Briefly, Marjorie explained the position that she and her chums had been forced into on the French girl's account. "You may tell Miss Archer, too, if you will. I'd like her to understand the situation."

"You girls have a hard task on your hands," was Veronica's grim comment. "I've seen that sort of reform tried so many times in—— Well, I've seen

it tried. It always fails. Perhaps I'm speaking too harshly for one in my humble position." She flashed Marjorie one of her strange smiles.

"It is right for you to say whatever you think," Marjorie made honest response. Inwardly, she decided that Veronica grew daily more baffling. For a girl who had been brought up in such humble circumstances she was astonishingly authoritative in her manner of speaking. Yet Marjorie could not help but admire her dauntless spirit of independence.

"You think me a queer girl, don't you?" challenged Veronica. "Never mind. Some day you'll learn to know and understand me better. About your club," she went on hastily as though anxious to lead Marjorie's attention away from herself, "I must refuse positively to belong to it. It would create trouble from the start. You have enough complications to manage as it is. I may have seemed unfeeling to you about Miss La Salle, but since I know more of the circumstances, I must say that I sincerely hope you may help her to find her better self. Look out, though, that she doesn't spread a web for your feet."

With this warning ringing in her ears, Marjorie left her new friend to continue on her way home to luncheon and entered at her own gate. Over a week had elapsed since the seven girls had congregated at Sargent's and made their first attempt toward forming the Lookout Club. During that time

all the other prospective members had been interviewed and with the exception of Veronica had heartily fallen in with the plan. This was the second time that Marjorie had invited the former to join the club. She was distinctly disappointed at Veronica's firm refusal, yet she knew that the girl had spoken wisely when she had remarked that her advent into the club would be sure to create a disturbance on Mignon's part.

Privately, Marjorie would not have been specially grieved if Mignon, instead of Veronica, had been the one to refuse to join. On the contrary, the French girl readily accepted the invitation.

Although Marjorie could not know it, Mr. La Salle had recently stumbled upon a letter from Rowena to Mignon among those in his morning mail. Unluckily for Mignon, it had drifted there quite by mistake. The postmark plainly revealing its source, he had sent for Mignon, forced her to identify the writing on the envelope and destroyed it unopened before her very eyes. Then he had taken her severely to task for it. Mignon had craftily pretended innocence, boldly assuring her father that she was astonished to think that Rowena Farnham would dare write to her. Partially convinced by her eager protestations, Mr. La Salle had made Mignon sit down and write Rowena a curt note, which he dictated, informing her that she, Mignon, refused absolutely to hold any further communication what-

ever with her. It may be stated that although he also attended to the mailing of that particular letter, he had nothing whatever to do with a second much longer epistle written by Mignon to Rowena in school the next day and surreptitiously mailed to her by special delivery.

Following on the heels of this dire calamity to Mignon's peace of mind had come Marjorie's invitation to join the Lookout Club. Mignon had hailed it as a timely aid toward restoring her father's doubtful confidence in herself, and accepted the invitation with alacrity. That she had done wisely was soon made manifest. Mr. La Salle was delighted when she casually informed him of the fact, and immediately promised to buy her an expensive gold vanity case, for which she had previously teased him without avail. Secretly, Mignon was highly pleased with herself. Rowena had always impressed it upon her that she must not scruple to use others to gain her own ends. She felt that in thus using Marjorie's invitation to appease her father's wrath, she had indeed managed very diplomatically. As for the letter, her father had forced her to write Rowena, Mignon knew it would be of no more consequence to her friend than so much blank paper. Rowena was too shrewd not to guess that Mr. La Salle was the motive power behind it.

Marjorie's views on the subject of Mignon, however, were not optimistic. At luncheon that day

she was very quiet. Veronica's warning still lurked in her brain. It was a queer situation she reflected. She had fought valiantly to make Mignon a member of the club, while all the time she was dreading the thought of it. On the contrary, she wished earnestly for Veronica to become a member, yet she had hardly protested against her refusal to join. Why was it, she pondered, that one's duty was hardly ever pleasant? Why did it so often require one to put aside the nice things and keep the disagreeable ones?

"What makes you so quiet, Lieutenant?" was her mother's solicitous question as Marjorie began a listless eating of a favorite dessert which she usually hailed with acclamation.

"Oh, I was thinking about the club. Veronica won't join it on account of Mignon. She thinks if she did that Mignon would make it disagreeable for all of us. Of course, she is right, yet it seems dreadfully unfair to her for me to accept that view of it. Just because I made that promise to Mr. La Salle, I am obliged to consider Mignon's welfare above Veronica's. It's too provoking!"

"If I felt that way about it, I would go to Mr. La Salle and ask him to release me from that promise," was her mother's tranquil advice. "If you lack the spirit of helpfulness, then you can hardly expect to be truly helpful. I don't mean that as censure, Lieutenant. You know my personal views on

the subject of Mignon. I am merely suggesting it as an open road out of your difficulty."

"That is almost what Connie said to Jerry when we first talked of having the club, and Jerry objected to my asking Mignon to become a member. I stood up for Mignon then. Now I almost wish I hadn't. Still I know it was right to do it, so I must stand by my colors. Veronica and I understand each other. She knows that she is welcome to join the club, no matter what Mignon may think. Still, I know that if I coaxed her every day for a week she wouldn't change her mind about it. It's just another of those miserable vicissitudes, and I shall have to accept it as such and try to meet it like a good soldier. I couldn't go to Mr. La Salle and ask him to release me from my promise. I'd be a deserter from the army. That reminds me, Captain, may the club hold its first meeting here to-morrow evening after dinner? I'd like it ever so much if you have no objections. You know that means eats. Such a worthy organization can't conduct a business session without a reward afterward." Marjorie's brown eyes danced mischievously.

"I shall feel highly honored," laughed her mother, "and will take it upon myself to see that the worthy organization is lavishly rewarded. How many girls will be here?"

"Fourteen, counting your grateful lieutenant," informed Marjorie. Finishing her dessert in a hurry,

she sprang from her chair and fervently embraced her mother. "You are positively splendiferous, Captain," she cried. "If I came and told you that I wanted to invite the whole four classes of Sanford High to this house to a party, you'd say 'yes.'"

"I doubt it," returned her mother with twinkling eyes. "Deliver me from any such invasion!"

"Oh, I am not going to try it," Marjorie laughingly assured. "That was merely an extravagance of speech. Miss Flint continually warns us against using extravagant language. But there are times when it's extravagantly necessary. Are you sure you won't mind letting us have the living room for our meeting? I'd have it upstairs in my house, only we'd be rather crowded."

"No; Lieutenant, I am willing to resign all claim to it for the evening. Mrs. Macy and I have a call to make on that poor man who was hurt so badly in that boiler explosion last week. I understand that he and his family are greatly in need of help. You will have to play hostess alone, as I am going to motor over for Mrs. Macy directly after dinner. I'll arrange with Delia this afternoon for refreshments for the club."

"Thank you a million times, Captain." With a final vigorous hug and a resounding kiss, Marjorie made a hop, skip and jump exit from the dining room. A twinkle of amusement lurked in her mother's eyes as through the wide doorway she watched

her active daughter cross the hall and enter the living room to put in the fifteen minutes' piano practice after luncheon, which formed a part of the busy lieutenant's daily program. The last mail of the morning had been productive of a letter for Marjorie from Mary Raymond. Mrs. Dean had placed it on the rack above the keyboard directly in front of Marjorie's open exercise book, with a view toward giving her a pleasant surprise.

That she had succeeded was immediately evidenced by the jubilant little cry which proceeded from the living room. As she had confidently expected, no sounds of practice arose from the neglected piano during the next fifteen minutes. Duty had succumbed to the fascinating wiles of Mary Raymond. As usual, Mary's letter covered many closely-written pages of note paper. She had much to tell of the glories of her far western home. She hoped that next summer Marjorie could surely make her the long visit which she had been unable to pay her that year. She was trying her best to be a good soldier. The Magic Shield of Valor had protected her more than once during her school life of the previous year. There were a number of very snobbish girls in the senior class at school, of which she was now a member. One of them reminded her a little of Mignon La Salle. She was a new girl in school whose father owned one of the largest ranches in the state. So far this new girl had been very

nice to her, but she had made up her mind to be very cautious about rushing into too-ready friendship with her.

"You see," Mary wrote, "I've had one severe lesson of that sort. I don't need another. By the way, how is Mignon behaving toward you since school began? I can't make myself believe that she has really changed. If I were you, Lieutenant, I would keep a safe distance from her. She is likely to turn and snap at you when you least expect it. It must be a relief to you girls to know that Rowena Farnham won't be a pupil of Sanford High this year. It wouldn't surprise me, though, if she and Mignon were friends still on the sly. They are a well-matched pair, and, therefore, hard to separate."

Marjorie smiled ruefully as she read Mary's uncomplimentary opinion of the French girl and her wise conclusion regarding Mignon and Rowena. Mary Raymond had never forgiven Mignon her transgressions; moreover, she never would forgive her. She wondered what Mary would think when she wrote her chum the information that Mignon had been invited to join the Lookout Club. Mary's forceful warning against the latter did not tend to lighten the perplexed lieutenant's own lively apprehension. Suppose her own insistence that they keep their promise to Mr. La Salle were to later enmesh both herself and her friends in some difficult web of Mignon's spinning? Given that this could easily

happen, it might take the greater part of their senior year to extricate themselves from it. On the other hand, membership in the club might have a highly beneficial effect on Mignon. Marjorie fervently hoped that it would. At any rate she had pleaded that Mignon should be asked to become a member of the club, and come what might, she must abide by the consequence of her own act.

CHAPTER VI

STRICTLY LOCAL POLITICS

MARJORIE was just putting on her hat preparatory to setting out for school, when Jerry Macy walked in at the open front door. "Thought I'd stroll over for you," she announced. "I might better say fly than stroll. I ran nearly all the way here so as to be sure to catch you at home." Jerry's very manner betokened the fact that she had something on her mind.

"I'm glad you came, Jerry. Captain says we can have the meeting here to-morrow evening. I wish you'd help me invite the girls. I'll tell Lucy, Rita, Florence, Gertrude and—Mignon. I think I'd better invite them myself as long as the meeting is to be at my house. You can tell the others. But we mustn't stand here to talk. It's after one o'clock

now." Seizing her hat, Marjorie hastily slipped it over her curls and the two left the house.

"I'll cheerfully invite anyone except Mignon," stipulated the stout girl. "Is Veronica coming?" They had now started down the street toward the high school.

"No." Marjorie's face clouded. "She refuses to join our club."

"Isn't that too bad?" deplored Jerry in deep disgust. "I suppose it's on account of Mignon that she won't belong to the club. I can't say I blame her much. Daisy Griggs told me this morning that Mignon said she wouldn't be seen associating with a menial like that Browning girl. Isn't that the limit? No apology for using slang, either. I mean what I say. There's just one thing about it, Marjorie, we'll have to do something to stop Mignon from making such malicious remarks about Veronica. All morning I kept thinking about what Daisy had said. While I was eating luncheon an idea popped into my head. We might as well make a special rule along with the regular club rules that the members must pledge themselves not to gossip or say hateful things about anyone. All the girls except Mignon will live up to it, I know. I've thought of another way, too, to keep her from gossiping. You'll think I've surely gone crazy when I tell you. Yet there's some method in my madness."

"What is it?" asked Marjorie curiously. She could think of no effectual method of sealing Mignon's wayward lips.

"Well, the best thing to do with Mignon is to elect her to an office in the club. Then she won't dare to do anything but behave herself. The eyes of the club will be on her all the time. She'll just have to walk a chalk line. She'll do it, too. You know how well she behaved when Laurie gave her back her part in the operetta last Spring. She loves power and position. Make her an officer in the club and she'll walk softly for fear of putting out her own bright light. What do you think about it, anyway?"

"It's a good plan," was Marjorie's unhesitating answer. "I don't believe it would be wise to have her for president, though, or even vice-president."

"No, she'll have to be secretary or treasurer," declared Jerry quickly. "In a club of fourteen, four officers will be about as many as we shall need."

"But suppose the girls don't care to vote for her?" Tardy remembrance of this obstacle now confronted Marjorie.

"Oh, it will have to be a cut-and-dried election as far as Mignon is concerned." Jerry grinned cheerfully as she made this bald statement. "You and I will have to do some electioneering. I'll interview one half of the girls and leave the other half to you. We'd better decide now on the office she's

to have," she added with the judicial air of a seasoned politician.

"We might propose her for treasurer," said Marjorie after a moment's reflection. "Very likely we won't have much money at first, but it would make her feel more important to take care of it than to be secretary and just set down the minutes of the different meetings."

"All right, we'll see to it that she is elected treasurer. I expect it will be *some* surprise to her. I hope to goodness she appreciates it enough to behave like a Christian. If she doesn't, you can blame me for the whole thing."

"It will be just as much my fault as yours if the plan doesn't work out well. It's rather queer, Jerry, but just before you came I was wondering whether I had done right after all in proposing Mignon as a member of the Lookouts. I had just decided that I had, when you came and proved it to me by proposing that we elect her to an office in the club. It looks as though there were some hidden influence at work, far greater than we are, which is urging us on to help her find herself. Who knows how wonderfully our little plot may turn out after all?"

"You might better say, 'Who knows *how* our little plot may turn out?'" grumbled Jerry. "It reminds me of a problem in algebra. Let X equal the unknown quantity, or rather let Mignon equal the unknown quantity. But let us once more be reform-

ers or die in the attempt. We've started the ball rolling, so we'll have to run along behind it and see that it keeps on rolling in the right direction."

Their entrance into the school building cut the earnest conversation short. Marjorie left Jerry in the corridor and went on alone to Miss Archer's office to apprise Lucy Warner of the new project and that the first meeting of the club was to take place at her home on the following evening. There was a distinct tinge of reserve in the green-eyed girl's greeting, which informed Marjorie that Lucy was still slightly peeved over the incident of the lost letter. Diligent inquiry had failed to bring forth any news of it. It was now over a week since Marjorie had lost it, and there seemed small chance that it would materialize at this late date.

"I have an invitation to deliver to you, Lucy," was Marjorie's frank address. "Can you come to my house to-morrow evening after dinner? A number of other girls will be there, too. We are going to organize a club, and we should like to have you belong to it."

For a moment Lucy regarded the winsome face before her with scowling indecision. She was very fond of Marjorie, yet she still cherished a slight resentment toward her. The friendly light in the other girl's brown eyes, however, filled her with an overwhelming sense of shame for her own stubbornness. Her wrinkled forehead suddenly cleared

and she said contritely: "I hope you'll forgive me, Marjorie, for being so hateful to you about that old letter. I am sorry. Please forget that it ever happened. It is sweet in you to ask me to belong to your club. I'd love to come to your house to-morrow night, and I surely will. Thank you for asking me."

Marjorie's lovely face broke into smiles. "Thank *you* for saying you'll come," she nodded brightly. "The meeting is to begin at eight o'clock. Come over earlier if you can. I must hurry along now. It's almost half-past one."

"I'll be there before eight," assured Lucy. Her uncompromising manner had vanished, and her stolid features shone with renewed good will.

As Marjorie hurried toward the senior locker room to dispose of her hat before entering the study hall, she felt as though a sudden weight had been lifted from her shoulders. It was not only her own remorse at losing the letter which had troubled her. Lucy's frosty attitude had belonged strictly to the embittered Observer. Having successfully dragged her out of that rut, Marjorie had deplored that she should be the one to shove poor Lucy back into it again. It was vastly comforting to her to find that the Observer had not risen again to dominate Lucy Warner.

CHAPTER VII

A STEP TOWARD POPULARITY

THE next evening found the Deans' living room in the possession of an ardent band of organizers, all bent on organization. A double row of chairs had been placed at one end of the pretty room, giving it a most business-like appearance. The long library table had been moved to the extreme opposite end, thus allowing sufficient free standing space before the rows of chairs for whomever should be chosen to conduct the meeting.

"It's eight o'clock, girls," announced Jerry Macy from the midst of a group comprising Muriel, Harriet, Susan and Esther Lind. As though in direct corroboration of her speech, the tall clock in the hall began a majestic intoning of the hour. "Much obliged for agreeing with me," commented Jerry with a waggish nod toward the kindly-disposed timepiece. "It's evident that I'm some little important person. Even the furniture in this house likes me."

"Of course it does," smiled Constance Stevens, who had approached the group just in time to hear Jerry's droll remark. "How could it help itself?"

"Them's my sentiments, too," retorted Jerry modestly, "only I hated to praise myself too much. But forget it. I mean, give Jeremiah's manifold vir-

tues a rest. Let's get busy. Ladies and no gentlemen, take your seats and the show will begin." Jerry raised her voice in a stentorian call: "Our esteemed hostess, Marjorie Dean, will address this noisy throng as soon as she can make herself heard."

"I wish you would do the talking, Jerry," pleaded Marjorie. Her glance suddenly straying to the rows of chairs on which the girls were disposing themselves, she exclaimed: "We can't begin the meeting yet. Mignon isn't here. I knew someone was missing, but I couldn't say who."

"Oh, bother!" the ejaculation slipped out before Jerry could check it. "Well, sit down, all of you, just the same. Mignon will be here. She told Marjorie that she would." Under her breath she muttered: "I hope it doesn't take her all evening to get here."

Hardly had Marjorie recognized the fact of Mignon La Salle's absence, when the loud whir of the electric doorbell proclaimed her arrival.

"Good evening," she greeted, as Marjorie ushered her into the hall. "I am sorry to be so late. An unexpected circumstance arose to delay me." Mignon did not add, however, that the true cause of her delay was a letter from Rowena Farnham, in which the writer of it rated her scathingly for allowing the letter she had written to fall into Mr. La Salle's hands. It had quite upset Mignon and put her distinctly out of humor with the idea of the meeting

at Marjorie's home. In consequence she had sulked in her room in solitary grandeur, and finally decided to go to the meeting merely for the sake of tantalizing Rowena by writing her a defiant account of it afterward.

"Oh, you aren't really late," excused Marjorie courteously. "We knew you'd soon be with us, so we waited for you. I see by your hatless condition that you drove here in your runabout. Come into the living room, Mignon, and take your place in joiner's row."

With a patronizing smile, which she blindly believed to be the acme of graciousness, Mignon followed Marjorie into the living room and seated herself on one of the two vacant chairs in the front row. As she greeted her companions her elfish black eyes kept up the usual incessant roving from face to face.

"Go ahead, Marjorie," Jerry ordered as she slipped into the remaining vacant chair. "It's up to you. I'm no orator."

"Girls," rang out Marjorie's clear tones, "some of you know quite a little bit more about this club idea than others. So I'd better tell you everything from the very beginning." Briefly, she related what had transpired among the seven seniors on the afternoon they had visited Sargent's. This accomplished she continued: "So you see we haven't done much as yet except choose a name and decide what

our object is to be. First let me ask you: Have any of you another name that you think would be better than the 'Lookout Club?'"

Emphatic approval forthcoming for the name already selected, she went on: "You must understand that the object of this club is purely to help anyone or any good cause we can. We must always be on the lookout with that purpose in view. At first we can't do much. Later we may do a good deal. But whatever our hands find to do, we must do it with our might. If the club proves a success, then we can pass it on to the next senior class of Sanford High. I believe it would make us all very glad some day to be able to say that we founded the first sorority in our high school. It seems strange to me that there has never been one in Sanford High. At Franklin High, the school I had just entered before I came to Sanford to live, there were several sororities. It would be splendid if we could call ourselves the founders of one at Sanford High.

"That is about all I can say regarding the object of our club. What we ought to do first this evening is to elect our officers. As there are only fourteen of us in the club, we don't need many officers. A president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer will be enough. For president, I wish to nominate Jerry Macy. Are there any other nominations for that office? As there are so few of us we might as well make the election a strictly informal affair.

Afterward we can conform to the usual method of club procedure."

"I nominate Marjorie Dean for president," put in Jerry quickly.

"I refuse the nomination." Marjorie smilingly shook her head. "I shall not accept an office. I prefer to be just a member."

"I think Jerry would make a fine president," said Harriet Delaney with emphasis.

"But I——" began Jerry.

"Are there any further nominations?" interrupted Marjorie mischievously.

"I don't want to be president." Jerry's protesting voice alone broke the silence.

"I second the nomination," declared Rita Talbot.

Paying no attention to the protest, Marjorie continued: "It has been regularly moved and seconded that Jerry Macy become president of the Lookout Club. Those in favor of the motion please respond by rising."

Twelve girls immediately stood up. Jerry alone remained seated, scowling ferociously.

"I declare Jerry Macy to be president of the Lookout Club," stated Marjorie. "Don't look so cross about it, Jerry. You can't help yourself. Come up here now and show us how nicely you can conduct the rest of the election."

"Not for mine. I mean not to-night," amended Jerry hastily. "I won't decline to be president, be-

cause I am no quitter. If you girls are determined to have me for that high and mighty office, I'll do my best to fill it. Still, I must say I don't admire your taste."

A general laugh went up at this naïve speech of acceptance. Only one girl did not smile. In her secret heart Mignon was not in favor of the stout girl for president. She had voted for her merely because she did not wish to be the only one on the contrary side.

"Since Jerry refuses to begin her duties to-night, I'll let her off for just once," asserted Marjorie playfully. "We will now consider the office of vice-president. Nominations are in order."

"I move that we nominate Muriel Harding for vice-president," volunteered Daisy Griggs.

Susan Atwell instantly seconded the nomination. The matter was then put to vote and Muriel was unanimously elected to the honor of the vice-presidency.

"Nominations for treasurer are now in order," announced Marjorie. Her color deepened a trifle as she spoke. This particular part of the election did not appeal to her. Both she and Jerry had encountered sturdy opposition when they had privately interviewed their friends regarding their proposal to make Mignon treasurer of the club. In the end they had won a concerted though reluctant consent to the project. Marjorie now felt a trifle anxious for fear

ample time for reflection might have caused one or more of them to alter their decision.

"I nominate Mignon La Salle for the office of treasurer." Constance Stevens' low, sweet voice cut the silence.

"I second the motion," came reassuringly from Irma Linton.

Marjorie flashed her a quick, grateful glance. Irma Linton, too, could always be depended on to do the right thing at the right moment. Her gaze resting next on Mignon, she was inwardly amused at the expression of blank amazement that overspread the French girl's sharp features. Mignon had, indeed, been treated to a pleasant surprise. A gleam of intense triumph shone in her large, black eyes when a moment later twelve girls loyally rose to their feet in response to Marjorie's mechanically-stated request.

Was it really true that she, Mignon La Salle, had actually been nominated by Constance Stevens and chosen by the girls whom she privately scorned to fill an important office in the club? It looked as though at last they were beginning to come to their senses. Possessed of an overweening vanity, Mignon smilingly accepted her election to the post of treasurer as a distinct compliment to herself. Far from being grateful for it, she regarded it purely as a step toward the popularity which she had ever craved. It also gave her a thrill of malicious joy

to discover in her hands an efficient means of arousing Rowena's jealousy. How greatly she would enjoy writing Rowena the news, and how furious Rowena would be! A mocking smile touched her red lips as she gleefully anticipated Rowena's rage.

Engaged in rapt meditation of this desirable consumation, Mignon did not realize that a pair of shrewd eyes had marked that smile and translated it with surprising accuracy. "I'll bet you my hat she's wondering how Rowena will take it," was Jerry Macy's astute conclusion. A surmise which seemed indeed to point to the truth of Jerry's frequent assertion that she "knew everything about everybody."

CHAPTER VIII

THE RULE OF RULES

THE fourth and last officer to be elected was the secretary, and this honor fell to gentle Irma Linton. Ever modest and self-effacing, Irma was even more greatly surprised at her own election than Mignon had been when Constance Stevens had suddenly declared herself.

"Will the four distinguished officers please come forward and stand in a row and receive the congratulations of the humble members?" requested

Marjorie gaily. "After that I will conduct them to their official stations and let them run the meeting."

Several minutes of merry talk and handshaking went on before Jerry assumed the scepter of office and called the meeting to order again. Mignon and Irma had now been given seats at the big library table at one end of the room. Muriel had moved her chair to the front, placing it a little to one side of where Jerry stood.

"Ahem!" ejaculated Jerry, then giggled. "As president of this club, it now becomes my duty to discuss with you a number of rules and regulations to which this distinguished organization must pledge themselves to live up. In the first place, you will all be taxed with dues. You are lucky to be charter members and thus avoid the payment of initiation fees. Now the question is how much are you willing to pay per week or per year or any other old per for your glorious privilege of membership. Now don't all speak at once, and don't be stingy. Remember, we are as yet a very poor and struggling concern. We have only one consolation. We needn't hire a hall. We can meet at one another's houses and thus practice thrift. Now let's have a little informal discussion about it."

"I think the per week idea would be nice." Harriet Delaney rose promptly to the financial situation. "We could give so much each week when we came to the meeting. Mignon could have our names

on a book just as the grammar school teachers keep a register. Then when we first came into the room where the meeting is held we could give her our money and she could credit us with it on her book. It's easier to give a little each week than to have to save it up and pay it all at one time. We wouldn't even miss it, for we are always spending small sums for candy and ice cream and moving pictures and such things. We ought to look at our club as an amusement and be willing to pay for it accordingly. Then, too, the money will be used to do good with."

"That is a very sensible plan," agreed Muriel Harding. "How much do you suppose we ought to give? I am willing to spend at least a quarter a week on the club."

"I'd never miss a quarter, either," affirmed Jerry Macy. "That's letting us off easy. Don't you think so, Marjorie?"

Marjorie was about to answer in the affirmative. Sudden remembrance of Lucy Warner checked her reply. Among the fourteen girls present that evening, Lucy Warner alone would be unable to spare that weekly sum. Hastily dividing 52 by 4 she realized that thirteen dollars would be a rather large slice out of Lucy's savings toward a college education. She wondered now whether she had been wholly wise in even asking Lucy to make one of an organization of girls who squandered weekly per-

haps more than poor Lucy could save in a month.

"I think it would be better to set the dues at ten cents per week," she said slowly. "We will always be sure to pay that much. At that rate we'd be paying $5.20 a year apiece, and in many clubs the yearly dues are not more than that. Of course, we are anxious to put some money in our treasury as soon as we can. If any of you feel like paying a year's dues in advance, so much the better for the club treasury. What we ought to do is to give an entertainment of some kind and earn quite a lot of money all at once. Almost any one in Sanford would be willing to contribute to a good cause. The Rebellious Princess netted us over five hundred dollars for the library. We could give a fair or a play or something and have a splendid time doing it, not to mention the money we'd earn."

"But suppose we do something like that and make a lot of money, what are we going to do with the money?" asked Florence Johnston.

"Give it to anyone who needs it," responded Marjorie. "As Lookouts we must poke around and find some good use for our money. There are always plenty of very poor people in Sanford who need help. Captain and Mrs. Macy went this evening to see a man who was hurt in an explosion. Now that he is so sick, he can't work and he and his family have nothing to live on. There are lots of such cases right here in this city. For two years at

Christmas time a number of we girls have tried to give the very poor folks a Merry Christmas. The club can do things like that. There might be some girl in our own school who would some day need our help. We'll just have to keep our eyes open and find out where our help is needed."

After a little further discussion, the girls agreed that the weekly sum of ten cents each would be satisfactory, at least for a beginning. Secretly two or three of them wondered at Marjorie's unwillingness to give more than that. They had always supposed her to be very generous. Mignon, in particular, was delighted at discovering, at last, what she regarded as a great flaw in Marjorie Dean's character. She mentally stored it away as a delectable bit of gossip to be circulated at her pleasure.

Having been provided with notebook and fountain pen, Irma busied herself with setting down the results of the various discussions regarding rules and regulations, which followed rapidly upon that of the dues. Once these points had been finally settled they were to be incorporated in a typed list and each girl was to receive a copy of the list.

Thus far during the meeting, nothing save the actual business of the club had been talked over. The object of the Lookouts, their dues, the time and place of meeting, these and other similarly important details had been gone over, each assuming the form of a set rule. The ethical side of the club had

not yet been touched upon. As president it now became Jerry's duty to introduce the delicate subject which she and Marjorie had confidentially gone over together on the previous day. This was a contingency on which blunt, good-humored Jerry had not reckoned. She had had a fixed idea that Marjorie would be elected president of the club, and had depended on her to lay down that one special rule of conduct that was intended to quiet Mignon's too-garrulous tongue. Now it appeared that the task devolved upon herself. Yet she did not feel equal to it. She knew that her brusque fashion of speaking was likely to arouse instant aggression on Mignon's part.

Her round, blue eyes significantly fixed on Marjorie, she now addressed the gathering with: "Is there anything else you can think of that ought to be added to the rules of our club? If there is——" She paused, continuing to stare at Marjorie with an expression of positive pleading on her plump face.

Marjorie read the glance aright and rose to Jerry's aid. Drawing a long breath she said with a gravity that brought all eyes to bear upon her: "Girls, there is one rule that we ought to make and live up to if we hope to become useful to others. It is the good old Golden Rule. 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.' It means to be absolutely loyal in thought, word and deed, to everyone with whom we come in contact.

Then we may hope for an equal amount of loyalty in return. Of course we expect to be loyal to one another. Otherwise there would be no use in forming this club. But we must be specially careful to give outsiders a perfectly square deal. If ever we expect to hand down our sorority to those who come after us, we must offer them an unblurred escutcheon. After all, it is the little things we say and do that often amount to the most for or against us.

"As our club becomes better known, the eyes of the other girls at Sanford High School will be turned upon us. We can't afford to do or say anything that will cause them to criticize us. We must carry ourselves so honorably that we shall be beyond criticism. That's why I think the Lookouts should adopt the Golden Rule for their very own and try always to keep it."

A vigorous clapping of hands followed Marjorie's earnest little speech, accompanied by, "Good for you, Marjorie," "The Golden Rule for the Lookouts," "You couldn't have chosen a better one," and various other bursts of girlish enthusiasm. Marjorie's sweet face grew rosy at the tributes that were hurled at her from all sides. She had guessed that, with the exception of Mignon, the girls would heartily echo her sentiments. A swift, uncontrollable flash of curiosity to see in what spirit the French girl had received her little talk, impelled her reluctant gaze to center itself upon Mignon.

The latter's face was a study. True her lips were curved in a smile intended to convey an amiable acceptance of the measures which Marjorie had so conscientiously advocated, but her black eyes glowed with a threatening light that belied her smiling lips. Within the guileful French girl's breast seethed a turmoil of conflicting emotions. Had she joined this silly club and accepted an office in it only to find that she had been trapped into pledging herself to become a goody-goody like Marjorie Dean? It looked very much as though she had done precisely that very thing. She reflected angrily that she might have known better. Personally, she was not in the least interested in putting herself out to help others. If certain persons in Sanford were so poor they hadn't enough to eat and wear it was none of her concern. The club no doubt would turn out to be as prosy an affair as all the other regulation charitable organizations in Sanford. She had a wild desire to spring from her chair, tell these stupid girls that they were all babies and rush from the house.

Yet there was her office of treasurer to be considered. At last she was in a fair way toward becoming popular. Then, too, these same babyish girls were vastly important pupils of Sanford High. Third, there was the question of her stern father to be considered. As a member of the Lookout Club, she would be in high favor with him. Per-

haps, after all, it would pay her to pretend to a loyalty which formed no part of her tricky, faithless composition. Later on, if she found the club unendurable, she could easily drop out of it. As for the much-vaunted Golden Rule, let the others live up to it as much as they chose. It should not trouble her in the least. She had ever been a law unto herself and she would always remain one.

CHAPTER IX

A REAL LOOKOUT

THE news that fourteen seniors of Sanford High School had formed themselves into an organization called the Lookout Club soon spread itself like wildfire throughout the big school. But even that information paled into insignificance beside the fact that Mignon La Salle was not only a member of it but an officer as well. The pupils who as sophomores, juniors and seniors had come to know the tricky French girl during her freshman year for precisely what she was, had been graduated and gone on to other fields. Many of the later lower class girls had, however, seen enough of her methods in the past two years to cherish no illusions concerning her. From her own lips they had heard the

most scathing criticism of Marjorie Dean and her friends. Now it became a nine days' wonder that they should have been so foolish as to admit faithless Mignon into their club.

"I'm positively sick and tired of being quizzed about how we happened to ask Mignon to join the Lookouts," declared Muriel Harding to Jerry one afternoon as the two girls were leaving the study hall for the day. Two weeks had passed since the meeting at Marjorie Dean's home and during that time Mignon had lost no opportunity to expatiate at length upon the importance of her position in the club.

"I've been asked that a few dozen times, too," was Jerry's disgruntled response. "Of course, it's nobody's business, but then you can't blame the girls much. Ever since she joined the Lookouts, Mignon's been strutting around like a peacock. I suppose she has told everybody in Sanford about it that would listen to her. There's at least one thing to be thankful for. It's better for her to talk about herself than about somebody else."

"Wait until the newness of being treasurer wears off, or until something happens in the club that doesn't suit her. Then, look out," predicted Muriel. "I am really sorry her father insisted on sending the Lookouts that check for one hundred dollars," she added confidentially. "It puts us under obligations to her. Everyone in school knows about that, too.

Connie's aunt gave the same amount, but Mignon has never said a word concerning it."

"I know it. Yet we couldn't very well accept the money that others have sent us, and refuse Mr. La Salle's check," was Jerry's gloomy reminder. "None of us had any idea when we started the club that our parents and friends would insist on helping us in that way. Why, we've nearly five hundred dollars in our treasury already."

That their elders should have shown such immediate and generous interest in the Lookout Club had, indeed, been a matter of unparalleled surprise to its members. Jerry Macy's father and mother had been the first to come forward with a check for fifty dollars. Mr. and Mrs. Dean had contributed twenty-five. Constance Stevens' aunt had presented them with one hundred dollars in gold, while the parents of the other girls had contributed sums of from five to fifteen dollars. Even Lucy Warner had come to Marjorie, amazement mirrored in her green eyes, as she handed the latter an envelope containing a crisp ten-dollar note. It had been mailed to her, she explained, together with a sheet of paper on which was typed: "Please ask your mother to offer this little contribution to the Lookout Club in her name. A friend."

This anonymous communication, folded about the ten-dollar note, was as much of a mystery to Lucy as the Observer letters had once been to Marjorie.

At first she had rather resentfully suspected that it might have come from Marjorie, Jerry or Constance Stevens, out of pity for her poverty. She said as much to Marjorie, who denied all knowledge of it. After making tactful inquiry of Jerry and Constance, she had assured sensitive Lucy that neither girl was responsible for the gift. She advised Lucy to follow the giver's direction implicitly. "You can't return it, because you don't know who sent it," she had argued, "and, of course, you don't wish to keep it. So you can only do as the giver requests."

It had been a matter of private satisfaction to Lucy when the money had duly been mailed to Mignon with an accompanying line from her mother which merely repeated the giver's direction. "To the Lookout Club in the name of Mrs. Margaret E. Warner."

Marjorie had also experienced a degree of quiet happiness in the thought that someone had been so supremely thoughtful of Lucy Warner. Privately she suspected that someone might be Miss Archer. The latter was already very fond of Lucy and also deeply interested in the progress of the club. She had given ample proof of this by sending for Marjorie one afternoon shortly after it had been organized to question her in kindly fashion concerning it. During this heart-to-heart talk with her principal, Marjorie had felt constrained to explain to her

concerning why Veronica Browning had refused to become a member of the Lookouts. Miss Archer had merely smiled and said: "Veronica has already explained matters to me. I think her decision a wise one. I fully understand your peculiar position in regard to Mignon, Marjorie. I can only commend you and your friends for your earnest endeavor to help her." The next day she had mailed a check for ten dollars to Mignon as her good will offering to the young enthusiasts.

Miss Archer's encouraging words had gone far toward imbuing Marjorie with renewed will to tackle the problem of reforming Mignon. For several days previous to it she had been daily annoyed, not only by the question, "Why have you girls taken Mignon La Salle into your club?" but by the vainglorious boasts of Mignon herself. Miss Archer's approval had given her fresh energy to live down these annoyances. She had resolutely dismissed them as mere exhibitions of foolish vanity on the part of the French girl. She believed that, later, Mignon would weary of her bragging and subside. But the end of the second week after the club election of officers marked no change in the French girl's tactics. On the very afternoon that Jerry and Muriel halted in the locker room to continue the exchange of confidences they had begun in the corridor, Marjorie entered it not long afterward, her thoughts on the precise subject they were freely discussing.

"Oh, here's Marjorie at last," called Muriel, as the former entered the nearly-empty coat-room. "What kept you and where's Connie? The rest of the girls couldn't wait. They all have dates or errands that sent them hustling along."

"Connie had to see Professor Fontaine," returned Marjorie. "She will be along soon. Lucy Warner asked me to stop at the office." The answer contained a trace of annoyance that her hearers instantly caught.

"What did she want with you?" demanded Jerry sharply. "Oh, I beg your pardon, Marjorie. I didn't mean to ask you that."

"Granted." Marjorie smiled faintly. "I intended to tell you, anyway. Lucy is very much hurt over something Mignon said to her. Yesterday morning Mignon walked part of the way to school with her. Lucy said that she was surprised, as Mignon had never even spoken to her until she joined the Lookouts. Almost the first thing she said to Lucy was that she was so glad she had helped her to get the position of secretary to Miss Archer. She went on to say that without it she guessed Lucy wouldn't have been able to pay her dues in the club, nor could her mother have given the ten dollars to it. You can imagine how Lucy felt. She didn't say much, only that she was surprised to know that Mignon had helped her to get the secretaryship. Then Mignon said she was surprised to think I had taken all

the credit for it, especially as she had gone with me to Miss Archer to see about the position."

"Well, of all things!" exploded Jerry Macy. "That's what I call pure, unadulterated nerve! I hope you stood up for yourself, Marjorie Dean. It would be just like you to let Mignon take the credit for something she had nothing to do with. This how to be helpful stunt has gone to her brain, I guess. Next thing we know, she'll be marching around Sanford High saying that she put the u in universe." Jerry sniffed her contempt of the too-efficient Mignon.

"I think that's simply ridiculous!" exclaimed Muriel hotly. "What did you say to Lucy, Marjorie?"

"I had to tell her the truth." Marjorie's lips tightened. "Even then Lucy didn't quite like it because Mignon happened to be with me that day I called on Miss Archer. She's such a queer girl, and so easily——I won't say offended. I'll just say hurt. I managed to straighten things with her, though, but she's terribly peeved with Mignon. She said she wouldn't say anything to her about it, unless Mignon starts the subject again. If she does—— Well, they will surely quarrel."

"It's easy enough to see through Mignon," was Muriel's displeased comment. "She has picked Lucy as the only one in the club she can patronize. If I were you, Marjorie, I'd tell Lucy to pay no attention to her whatever beyond being merely civil."

"I told her that," nodded Marjorie. "Perhaps I shouldn't have done so, but I knew she would have to be warned. It came to me in a flash that if Mignon tried to start trouble in the club she'd start it through Lucy."

"I guess we'll have to put a label on Mignon," decided Jerry. " 'Dynamite, handle gently,' or something like that."

The three girls giggled in unison at the mental vision Jerry's proposal conjured. The bare idea of haughty Mignon parading about with such an ominous legend attached to her person was a joy to contemplate.

"We'll all have to pretend it's there and treat her accordingly," chuckled Muriel. "Really and truly, girls, about all we've done since the club started is to worry about Mignon's failings. It's time we let her take care of herself and turn our minds to something important. So far the Lookouts haven't looked out for a single chance to spend their money."

"We've all been looking-out, but we haven't located anyone or anything yet that seems to need it," stated Jerry with some energy. "That man who was hurt is in a hospital now, and my mother and Mrs. Dean and some others are taking care of his family."

"I saw something the other day that made me wonder—— Oh, here's Connie!" The arrival of

Constance Stevens cut Marjorie's sentence short. "Now we had better vacate this sacred spot. We aren't supposed to linger in the locker room after dismissal."

"There's a new confectioner's shop just opened down on Bellevedere Street," suggested Jerry hopefully. "'Dexter's,' I think the sign says."

"Let's try it for variety's sake," laughed Marjorie. "When we get there, I'll tell you about my new idea for the Lookouts."

"I've thought of one, too," remarked Constance, "but I'll save it until later."

"Come on, then." Jerry took Muriel by the arm and headed the procession of four down the street. It was only a short walk to Jerry's find, and four voices lifted themselves in approval of the pretty little shop, done in pale blue and white, with its long marble soda fountain at one side of the spacious room, and its dainty white tables and chairs. Having gleefully ordered several delectable new concoctions of which Sargent's could not boast, the quartette settled themselves to talk.

"You first, Connie," decreed Marjorie. "We know you've something nice to tell us."

"I don't know what you may think of my idea, but here it is. You remember the little gray house that I used to live in. Well, it's not gray any more. It's been newly painted a pretty dark green with lighter green trimmings. It has never been rented

since we lived there. I suppose the owner thought it never would be unless he had it repainted. You know it is quite near to that large silk mill where so many women work. The majority of them are married women and have to help support their families. They live mostly in tumbledown shacks not far from the mill.

"They have to go to work very early in the morning and don't get home until after six o'clock in the evening. That means that their poor little children who are too young to go to school have to take care of themselves the best way they can. I've often walked through that district and seen those poor tiny tots trying to play by themselves and looking utterly neglected. When I think of how much Charlie now has it makes me feel dreadfully for them. I've taken them fruit and toys sometimes, but that doesn't help much. What they need is good care. For the sake of my own little brother, I wish every child mght be happy." A wealth of pity shone in Constance's blue eyes as she said this.

"Go on, Connie," urged Jerry. "I begin to see now what you're driving at."

Constance smiled, then continued: "What I thought we might do would be to rent the little gray house and make a day nursery of it. Then these poor women could leave their children at it when they go to work in the morning and come after them at night. You remember how large the sitting room

is, Marjorie. It takes up almost all of the downstairs part, and there's a small kitchen in the rear. We could rent the house for ten dollars a month, and pay some good woman and a young girl to come and look after these children until evening.

"From four until six o'clock each day we could take turns, two of us at a time, going there to play with the children and tell them stories. I have talked it over with my aunt and she agrees to pay for the hired help if the Lookouts would like to do the rest. It wouldn't cost much to give the children a nice luncheon every day. Of course they would have their breakfasts and suppers at home. We couldn't afford to serve them with the three meals. But the nursery itself and the luncheon would be free. We wouldn't care to charge them a cent. As for the furniture, we ought to buy two long tables and some kindergarten chairs. Then we ought to furnish one upstairs room with about four little beds and the rest of the things that go in a bed room. Then we would have a place for any of the children that weren't feeling very well. There is a nice large yard behind the house where they could play in summer or even in winter when the weather wasn't too cold. I don't know how many children would come; about twenty or perhaps twenty-five." Constance paused and eyed her friends wistfully. Their slence made her wonder if they disapproved of her plan.

"Connie Stevens, you are a perfect dear!" exclaimed Muriel. "That's the nicest plan I ever heard. I love children, and I've often noticed those poor little things that live near the silk mill. I'd be only too glad to give one afternoon a week to them."

"So would I." Marjorie's face shone radiant good will. "You are a real Lookout, Connie. It would make us very happy just to know that we were making those poor children happy. At Christmas we could give them a tree, too. I know Captain will want to help with them, too."

"You are O. K., Connie, and so is your aunt!" exclaimed Jerry. "Tell her for me that she is a peach; I mean a glittering angel. It's a good thing the club meets to-morrow night. I'd hate to have to go around all week keeping this glorious stunt to myself."

Brimming with enthusiasm of this worthy project, the quartette fell into an eager discussion of what they would need to put the house in readiness for its juvenile guests, and the probable cost of their little investment in human happiness. It was a protracted session which they held at the round table and when it broke up shortly before six o'clock they had finished a third supply of sundaes and were of the firm opinion that dinner that evening was quite unnecessary to their welfare.

It was not until she had reached her own gate

that Marjorie remembered that she, too, had conceived of an idea which the club might see fit to incorporate into their campaign of usefulness. It seemed rather unimportant beside the greater project for the day nursery, yet she believed it was not valueless. However, it would keep, she reflected. She would reserve it until the other scheme was well on the way toward fulfillment.

How wonderful it would be to bring sunshine into the lives of those poor neglected children! She was sure that the other members of the club would hail the plan with acclamation. What a dear, unselfish girl Connie was! How unutterably sweet she had looked when she had said that she wished every child might be happy for the sake of little Charlie. Marjorie's rapt reflections ended in a sharp gasp of dismay. Recollection of Charlie Stevens brought to her the vision of a black-haired, elfish-eyed girl who had once cravenly left a small runaway to shift for himself on a dark night. There was one member of the club on whom the woes of these children would make no impression, and that member was Mignon La Salle.

CHAPTER X

HALLOWE'EN MYSTERIES

At the meeting of the Lookouts on the following evening, Constance Stevens' thoughtful suggestion that the club rent the little house where she had once lived and transform it into a day nursery, met the instant approbation of every member except Mignon La Salle. She was far too clever, however, to pit herself openly against the volume of approval that rose to high tide. Only by the eloquent shrugging of her shoulders and the ominous glitter of her black eyes did she betray her contempt for the project. She resolved within herself that no amount of persuasion should induce her to contaminate her precious person for one moment by an association with those "horrible slum children." These idiotic girls might do as they chose, so would she. On whatever afternoon she should be detailed for duty in this detestable day nursery, she would find some good excuse for evading it.

It would take at least a month, she reasoned, to prepare the house for its small guests. By that time she might have become tired of the club. Still she rather liked her office of treasurer. It made her feel very important to know that the financial affairs of the club were in her hands. The Lookout Club had

deposited its funds in the First National Bank of Sanford. She had been officially introduced to its president and duly authorized to deposit or draw out money from it in their name. If she resigned from the club now she would forfeit the privilege to use the check-book which had been given her. The club would soon begin to make frequent demands upon her for money with which to meet the various financial obligations which the furnishing of the day nursery would incur. Mignon decided that she would adroitly shirk the unpleasant duties of the club, but still retain her office. So long as she proved herself to be an efficient treasurer the girls might grumble as much as they pleased about her other shortcomings. At best they were too stupidly set on fair play to demand her resignation.

Intimate association with Rowena Farnham had developed Mignon's fund of trickery to the nth power. Rowena had taught her how to play a subtle game as long as mere subtlety would answer the purpose. If there came a time when it proved unavailing, she would leave these babies in the lurch as boldly and defiantly, as Rowena had once performed the same unscrupulous office for herself. Contrary to all expectation, Rowena had taken the news of Mignon's advent into the club with admirable tranquility. For reasons best known to herself, she had adopted this plan of action. Mignon's letter informing her of the French girl's sudden rise in

popularity had merely caused her to throw back her head and laugh; a sure sign that she meant mischief.

Meanwhile, unconscious of the treacherous thoughts that settled in the brain of their graceless treasurer, thirteen girls were working heart and hand after school hours toward perfecting their cherished plan. The last of October found it nearing completion. The little house in which Constance had once dwelt had taken on a new lease of life. From cellar to roof it was a vision of shining cleanliness and order. The large room where the children were to play looked like a veritable kindergarten. Rows of sturdy plants decked the spotless windows, uncurtained in order to permit the greatest possible amount of light. The two long tables flanked by rows of cunning little chairs, stood ready to receive the coming residents. All sorts of toys had been unearthed from countless trunks in which reposed the treasures of the members' own early days, now offered at the shrine of childhood. The kitchen had been fitted out completely, and its ample cupboard boasted of a new set of pretty dishes. Upstairs the rest room, with its four tiny white beds and spotless appointments, was a joy to behold.

Marjorie, Jerry, Constance and Irma had diligently gone the rounds of the squalid mill neighborhood, announcing the creation of the nursery to

the stolid, wondering inhabitants, and graciously inviting them to bring their children to partake of its benefits. Youngsters from two years of age to six were placed on the eligible list and to the care-worn toilers this enticing offer seemed too good to be true. The nursery was scheduled to open on Saturday afternoon, the first of November. A competent elderly woman and a strong, willing maid had been secured and so far as they knew the Lookouts had left nothing undone that might add to the welfare of their tiny charges.

"Really, children, I think we've earned our Hallowe'en party to-night!" exclaimed Marjorie Dean, as in company with Jerry, Irma, Muriel, Susan Atwell and Constance they left the nursery, to which they had repaired after school for a last fond survey of their pet.

"Please hurry over to our house early," requested Jerry. "This is to be a weird and awesome night when spirits walk abroad and witches ride the air on broomsticks. Don't one of you dare to forget to bring a broom with you."

"Very mysterious," giggled Susan. "I suppose you've fixed up some awesome sights for our timid eyes. You're awfully stingy not to tell us a thing about it beforehand. All we know is that we're to wear black masks and black dominos, and each bring a broom."

"All shall be revealed to you in due season."

Jerry raised a dramatic arm, then dropped it and grinned tantalizingly.

"Never mind," consoled Marjorie. "We haven't long to wait. It's five o'clock now. Three hours more and we'll be in the thick of weird, mysterious happenings."

"Three hours is as long as three days when one's curiosity is whetted to a sharp point," laughed Irma. "Those queer, phosphorescent invitations of yours, Jerry, were enough to keep us guessing what the rest of the party would be like."

"Some invitations," chuckled Jerry. "The Crane put me on; I mean gave me the idea for them."

"When mine came, I opened it and thought somebody had sent me a queer-looking bit of paper for a joke," confessed Susan, "so I threw it in the waste basket. I had the pleasure of hunting through the basket for it the next day, after Marjorie had explained it to me." This sheepish admission was followed by Susan's inevitable giggle, and five voices immediately echoed it.

With the happy prospect of the grand opening of the nursery on the morrow and Jerry's delightful Hallowe'en frolic that evening, the sextette of girls was in high spirits as they sauntered along in the sharp, October air. Marjorie could hardly remember a time when she had felt more utterly at peace with the world. A quiet happiness permeated her whole being, and she was filled with the sense

of satisfaction which the performance of a good deed always brings.

Seven o'clock saw her slipping into the exquisite peachblow evening frock of shimmering silk which she was to wear to the party under her domino, nor could she be other than pleasantly elated at the story her mirror told her. Her curls arranged in a low, graceful knot at the back of her shapely head, her cheeks glowing with excitement and her brown eyes two pools of radiant light, Marjorie could not be blamed for taking a pardonable pride in her appearance. She heaved a soft little sigh of regret as she covered the glory of her new frock with a somber domino, and hid her witching face behind a black mask. Then she ran lightly downstairs, stopping in the hall to annex the new broom Delia had left there for her.

"I'm ready, Captain," she called in deep, sepulchral tones, as she paused in the doorway of the living room where her mother sat reading.

Sight of the sinister figure and sound of the hollow voice startled Mrs. Dean briefly, as she glanced up from her book.

Marjorie's merry laugh rang out as she hastily stripped off the concealing domino and mask. "I thought I could scare you," she teased. "Now tell me that I look very gorgeous and kiss me good-bye, for I must hurry along to the land of spooks and witches."

"Remember, fine feathers don't make fine birds," retaliated her mother, fond admiration of her pretty daughter in her sweeping survey of the dainty vision before her.

"That means I look specially nice," translated Marjorie. "Thank you, Captain." Holding the broom rifle fashion, she brought one hand to her forehead in brisk salute. "Now the gallant army is off duty for a pleasant evening. I hope I haven't kept General waiting." Marjorie hastily resumed her cloak and mask.

"Ask him," smiled her mother as she accompanied her to the door. Lifting the flap of the mask she kissed Marjorie tenderly. "Have a good time, dear, and come home in good season."

"What have we here!" exclaimed Mr. Dean in mock horror as a weird, black-robed figure, bearing the proverbial witch's broom, advanced down the walk toward the automobile in which he was seated. "Must I show the white feather and flee from this ghastly apparition?"

"You must *not,*" emphasized a very human young voice. "Stand your ground or be court-martialed."

"I won't budge an inch. I prefer the company of shades, rather than lose my prestige as an invincible general," flung back Mr. Dean valiantly.

Helping Marjorie to a seat beside him in the limousine, and carefully disposing the broom in the tonneau, they were soon speeding down the road to

cover the short distance that lay between the homes of the two families. A continual ripple of most unspectre-like laughter proceeded from behind the black mask as they scudded along. Between Marjorie and her father the serious side of life seldom rose. Whenever they were together, they invariably behaved like two gleeful children out for a holiday.

"Now go and keep company with the other horrors of Hallowe'en," was Mr. Dean's parting comment as he set Marjorie down at the gate, kissed her and handed her the broom.

"Just watch me go," she called back merrily, turning to flaunt the broom in fantastic salute as she flitted up the long walk to the dimly lighted house. "Things certainly have a ghostly look," she decided as she rang the bell.

The next instant she uttered a sharp little cry as the door opened and a frisky imp in a tight-fitting suit of black seized her by the hand and hauled her inside. From the shadowy hall a tall sheeted form loomed up before her, giving vent to a deep groan. Before she could do more than gasp, her lively conductor had possessed himself of her broom, decorated it with a piece of wide blue ribbon, pinned a rosette of similar ribbon to her domino, both of which he snapped up from a tray held by the sheeted spectre. Then he whisked her into what had formerly been the Macys' living room. It was now transformed into a huge cavern, dimly lighted by

grinning Jack-o'-lanterns. Masked and black-garbed figures flitted about its spacious confines at will. In one corner of the room stood a tripod, from which hung a large kettle. Around the kettle danced three terrifying figures who might easily have been identified as the weird sisters who appeared to the ill-starred Macbeth.

Straight to the fatal witch rendezvous Marjorie was towed by her insistent guide. Pausing in her grotesque dance, one of the weird sisters seized a cup from a number of others which stood on a small table near the tripod. Flourishing it, she pounced upon a small ladle that stood upright within the utensil. Dipping it into the steaming contents of the kettle, she filled the cup and offered it to Marjorie. "Drink ye the witches' deadly brew," she croaked.

The "witches' deadly brew" proved to be very excellent chicken boullion, which did not come amiss after Marjorie's ride in the cool autumn air. By the time she had finished it, her goblin conductor had scurried away to answer the ring of the door bell, leaving her to mingle with the other sinister shapes that wandered singly or in twos and threes about the room. As everyone was firmly bent on keeping his or her identity a secret, conversation languished among that mysterious company. It was comparatively easy to distinguish the masculine portion of the assemblage from the feminine, however,

by reason of height and the mannish shoes that were worn by at least half of the dominoed guests.

For at least fifteen minutes after Marjorie's arrival, the helpful imp was compelled to do constant duty at the front door, and the impromptu cavern soon overran with its strange, uncanny occupants. In the midst of their perambulations a reverberating peal of manufactured thunder rent the air and the zealous imp skipped into the room.

"Friends and fellow spooks," he declaimed in a high, piping voice, "I am the humble servitor of the Spirit of Hallowe'en. Come with me and I will show you the Cavern of Illusion where she awaits you!"

The humble servitor pranced down the long hall to the Cavern of Illusion, once the back parlor, an eager crowd of somber-looking followers at his heels. It was an orderly rush, however, although the fell silence that had pervaded the company at first was now broken by murmurs of subdued speech and frequent giggles. The Cavern of Illusion was in absolute darkness except at one end, where a square of white, presumably a sheet, stretched itself in the form of a screen. A faint light from behind it caused it to stand out clearly against the surrounding blackness.

"The Spirit of Hallowe'en," shrilled the imp, who had stationed himself close to the screen. Hardly had he spoken the words when a long roll of thunder

sounded and a fantastic shape in the high-peaked hat and circular cloak that betokens the legendary witch of All Hallow's night, leaped upon the screen. On one shoulder perched a black cat and in one hand she bore a broom stick. Making a sweeping curtsey, she disappeared from the screen, to reappear instantly minus cat and broomstick. Curtseying again, she began a dance, fantastic in the extreme, but singularly graceful. She dipped, whirled and swayed, using her cloak with pleasing effect, and ended the performance by apparently flying straight upward to disappear at the top of the screen.

The wild burst of ardent applause that followed her clever terpsichorean effort pointed to the fact that the masked audience was at least possessed of very human young throats. The Spirit of Hallowe'en declined, however, to respond to the frantic demonstration, and a moment later the imp's falsetto tones made themselves heard above the din.

"Follow me to the Hall of Fate," he ordered. "There the Three Weird Sisters tarry to wail the Chant of Destiny."

This invitation conveyed the information that where the fateful kettle simmered under the guardianship of the weird three must undoubtedly be the Hall of Fate. The guests did not wait to follow, but made a bee-line for it, at least half of them reaching it ahead of their obliging master of ceremonies. Once they had gathered there the Weird

Sisters entertained them with a spirited dance about the kettle, to the accompaniment of an unearthly chant, pitched in a minor key.

At the conclusion of it a terrific burst of thunder broke and the Hall of Fate became suddenly flooded with light.

"All aboard for the ball room!" shrieked the imp in a voice that strongly resembled that of Danny Seabrooke. "The Test of True Love will presently be held there."

This astonishing statement raised a shout of laughter. The young folks needed no second urging, however, as they willingly mounted the two flights of stairs after the imp, who skipped nimbly ahead of them, while the Three Weird Sisters brought up the rear. The apartment used by Hal and Jerry for a ball room, when entertaining their friends, was situated on the third floor of the east wing of the house. It was especially large and airy, with a beautifully polished floor, and, therefore, well suited to the purpose. Jerry always referred to it as the "town hall" and took considerable pleasure in the possession of it.

Arriving in the ball room, the maskers found that the four musicians hired to play for the dancing were already at their post. Despite their curiosity as to what particular ordeal awaited them in the cause of true love, the enticing measures of a waltz sent the masculine portion of the company scurry-

ing for partners. It was not until the fifth dance was over that the imp staggered into their midst, heavily laden with a freight of beribboned brooms. Depositing them in a corner he promptly disappeared, to return presently with a second load. By that time the sixth dance had ended, and the dancers were beginning to murmur concerning their masks, which were becoming rather too concealing for comfort. Then, too, nearly everyone had come into a fair knowledge regarding the identities of at least part of his or her companions.

It was, therefore, wholly to their liking when the ubiquitous imp marched to the center of the floor and declaimed in true Danny Seabrooke fashion: "Damsels of the Domino, please line up across the floor. The Test of True Love is about to begin." His next order, "Knights of the Domino, your fiery steeds await you! Kindly march in line to the corner and select your steed, then find your partner for the evening!" evoked a tumult of laughter. The Test of True Love promised to be decidedly amusing.

CHAPTER XI

AN UNWILLING CAVALIER

THE laughter grew louder when, according to the energetic imp's direction, four solemn, black-robed figures obediently bestrode their broomstick steeds. They next pranced confidently up and down the line of girls in hopeful search of the fair one, the ribbon rosette on whose sleeve corresponded respectively with the bow on the broom each rode. When the first four had triumphantly ended their quest and marched their newly-acquired partners out of line, four more gallants fared forth to seek their own, and so on until seventeen broomstick knights had appropriated their seventeen respective partners.

"Unmask!" sang out the master of ceremonies, thoughtfully setting the example. Minus the false face he had worn, Danny Seabrooke's grinning, freckled features looked out from his close-fitted, pointed cap.

"Why, how funny!" exclaimed Marjorie Dean, as she discovered her partner to be none other than Hal Macy. "You are the last person I expected would be my partner."

"You're not sorry, are you?" Hal smiled rather tenderly at the lovely girl beside him.

"Of course not," was Marjorie's frank reply. "I am awfully glad. I'd rather have you for a partner than any other boy in school."

"Would you, Marjorie?" Hal's voice contained a hint of eagerness. Lately he had begun to realize that his boyish affection for Marjorie Dean was verging on a far deeper emotion. Yet the very candidness of Marjorie's heartily expressed preference for him, showed him quite plainly that she meant it merely in a sense of frank friendliness.

"You know I would," she nodded seriously. "Aren't we sworn comrades?" The real meaning of his question had passed entirely over her head.

"We are, indeed," was the hearty response. Inwardly Hal vowed that for the present he would try to regard Marjorie wholly in that light. Yet within himself he cherished a fond hope that some day he might come to mean more to this sweet, unselfish girl than a mere comrade. Although Marjorie did not realize it, that evening marked the beginning of Romance for her.

"I'll have to confess that I found you out before you unmasked, Marjorie," he laughed. "Naturally I picked the broom that wore the blue ribbon."

"You are a most designing knight," she answered heartily. "I wonder if Laurie discovered Connie beforehand and did likewise." Her glance travelling the long room a soft "Oh!" escaped her. Laurie had indeed acquired a partner, but that part-

ner was Mignon La Salle. A quick survey of the room discovered Constance standing beside Miles Burton, a senior at Weston High School. Marjorie could not help noting how delighted Mignon looked. Laurie, however, did not appear specially elated. He was making a desperate attempt to hide his disappointment under a show of chivalry which Marjorie knew to be forced.

Before she had time to make further observations, the announcing strains of another dance rang out and she floated away on Hal's arm. When that dance was over Sherman Norwood claimed her for the next and the succeeding one she danced with Hal.

"Now I must find Connie and have a talk with her," she declared brightly, when that dance was finished.

"And I must do my duty by Jerry's guests," commented Hal somewhat ruefully. "Be a good comrade and save as many dances for me as you can, Marjorie."

"I will." Marjorie left him with a smiling little nod and set off to find Constance. Half way across the floor she encountered Jerry who was hurrying to meet her.

"I was looking for you, Marjorie. Come downstairs with me and see if you can't persuade Veronica, I mean Ronny, I've decided to call her that, to stay for the evening."

"Veronica!" Marjorie's brown eyes widened. "Is she really here? I thought you said she wouldn't come. I haven't seen her."

"Oh, yes, you have, only you didn't know it," chuckled Jerry. "You saw her do that shadow dance. She did say she wouldn't come. Then when I told her about the stunts I was going to have she offered to come of her own accord and do that dance. But she doesn't want anyone else to know that she's here. I can't understand that girl. She's certainly the world's great mystery."

Marjorie's face registered her surprise. "She does act queerly sometimes. I don't know why, unless it's because she feels that her position at Miss Archer's might make a difference with us. As though it could. I'd love to see her to-night, if only for a few minutes. Your party is lovely, Jerry. It is so original. I hadn't the least idea until they unmasked that Harriet, Rita and Daisy were the three witches. I suspected that tall, white figure to be the Crane, and, of course, I knew Danny Seabrooke the minute I first set eyes on him. You and Hal must have worked awfully hard to decorate everything so beautifully. It's the nicest Hallowe'en party I've ever attended."

"I'm glad you like it." Jerry beamed her gratification. "It did keep Hal and me hustling. I'm sorry for poor Laurie, though. It's too bad that he had to go and draw Mignon for a partner. She'll

stick to him all evening like grim death. Trust her to do that."

"Oh, well, Connie won't care. It will only amuse her. Laurie isn't very happy over it though," was Marjorie's regretful comment.

As they talked the two girls had been making their way downstairs. In the back parlor they found Veronica, a demure little figure in her plain blue suit and close-fitting blue hat. "I'm glad you came down, Marjorie," she greeted. "You look so sweet in that peachblow frock. It's a joy to see you."

"Thank you, Veronica. Your shadow dance was also a joy to see. You are a very clever young person. I wish I could dance like that."

"Why can't you stay, Veronica?" lamented Jerry. "I'd love to have you meet the Weston High boys. They are nice fellows and good dancers."

"Don't tempt me." Veronica made a smiling gesture of protest. "I love to dance. When I was——" she stopped with her usual strange abruptness. "I must go," she asserted decisively. "My —Miss Archer will wonder what has kept me so long."

"But we came down here as a special committee of two to persuade you to stay," pleaded Marjorie.

"Thank you ever so much. It is dear in you to take so much trouble for a poor servant girl." Veronica's gray eyes twinkled as she referred to her lowly estate.

"I wish you wouldn't say that, Ronny," protested Marjorie, unconsciously using Jerry's new name for the pretty girl.

"Where did you hear that name? I mean the name 'Ronny?'" Veronica's startled question held a note of sharpness. "I never mentioned it to you. I am sure of that." A decided pucker of displeasure showed itself between her dark brows.

"Why—that—why—Jerry mentioned it," stammered Marjorie, somewhat taken aback by Veronica's brusque manner of speaking. "She thought of it herself, I suppose." Flushing, she turned to Jerry for corroboration. The stout girl's round eyes were fixed shrewdly on Veronica.

"I take all the blame and the credit for it," was Jerry's prompt assertion. "It's a cunning nickname and easier said than Veronica. If you'd rather we'd not call you Ronny, then we won't. Of course, you never mentioned it to me. I just made it up. It suits you, though. I'll bet we're not the first persons to call you by it, either," she added, hazarding a shrewd guess.

A tide of pink flooded Veronica's white skin. Her forehead smoothed itself magically. With a short, embarrassed laugh, she said briefly: "I don't mind if you girls call me Ronny." She made no attempt, however, to affirm or deny Jerry's guess. "Now I mustn't stay another moment, or some of your guests may wander downstairs and find me here."

So saying, she began to move determinedly toward the doorway that opened into the hall, Jerry and Marjorie following. Pausing at the front door only long enough to offer them her hand in parting, Veronica made a quick exit from the house and sped down the drive. Accompanying her as far as the veranda, Marjorie and Jerry watched her in silence until she had been swallowed up in the black shadows of the night.

"Some little puzzle." It was Jerry who spoke first. "I've always said that I knew everything about everybody, but I'll have to make one exception. I don't know a single thing about Veronica except what she has chosen to tell me. There's no way of finding out anything, either. I'd as soon think of asking the Shah of Persia how much gold he had in his royal treasury as to ask Miss Archer about her."

"No; we couldn't question Miss Archer," Marjorie agreed soberly. "We must accept Ronny at her own face value, and not trouble ourselves about her peculiarities. Some day she may explain to us of her own accord the very things that puzzle us now. The best way to do will be to pretend not to notice anything mysterious about whatever she may say or do. We know that she is generous and high-principled and truthful. That ought to be enough for us to know."

"Yes, that's so," admitted Jerry. Tearing her

thoughts from the strange girl, who had just left them, she linked an arm in one of Marjorie's, saying: "We'd better go back to the town hall. We've already missed two or three dances."

Deeply absorbed in conversation, they entered the house and climbed the stairs to the ball room, quite unaware that a black-eyed girl in an elaborate old gold satin evening frock had slipped cautiously from the living room and sheltered herself for a moment in the alcove formed by the stairs.

Mignon La Salle had left the ball room almost immediately after Marjorie and Jerry had exited from it. She had not seen them leave it, however. She had come downstairs on an errand of her own, which had nothing whatever to do with them. Overjoyed at having Laurie Armitage for her partner for the evening, she had resolved to make hay while the sun shone. Mignon had arrived at the Macys' in her runabout, driven by the long-suffering William. But she did not purpose to return home in it. She intended to return in Laurie's roadster. On arriving, her lynx eyes had spied it parked before the gate. As Laurie had drawn her for a partner for the evening, she was positive that courtesy would prompt him to see her home, if the occasion demanded it. To make sure of this, she planned secretly to telephone her residence and leave word that William need not come for her. As her father was out of the city on business, she ran no special risk of

having her plan fail. When the party was over, she would loudly bewail the non-appearance of her runabout and lay it at the door of poor William's stupidity. Then Laurie would be obliged to take her home in his roadster, or appear in a most ungentlemanly light. It would also be a great triumph over that hateful Constance Stevens.

Filled with this laudable intention, Mignon had sped cat-footed down the stairs. The sound of girlish voices suddenly emanating from the back parlor brought her to a halt. She heard Veronica's warm greeting of Marjorie and recognized her unmistakable tones. Breathlessly she took in the conversation that ensued. The moment she heard Veronica announce her departure, Mignon made a swift, noiseless dash for the living room, gaining it just in time to avoid being seen by the trio as they passed from the back parlor into the hall. Hardly had the front door closed upon them when she darted across the room and took refuge behind a Japanese screen.

Determined not to be balked in her resolve to telephone her home, she crouched there and waited until the sound of the reopening and closing front door followed by footsteps on the stairs and the hum of receding voices, informed her that Marjorie and Jerry had returned to the ball room. Fearing further interruption to her project, she lost no time in calling up her home and impressively de-

livering her command to the maid who answered the telephone. Well pleased with what she had heard and done, Mignon returned to the dancers inwardly congratulating herself on her own cleverness.

As the evening progressed she found Lawrence Armitage a far from devoted knight. True he danced with her several times and was uniformly courteous in his behavior toward her, but whenever he could seize an opportunity to spend a moment or two with Constance Stevens he made good use of it. At supper, which was served at small tables in the dining room, she was secretly furious to find herself and Laurie at the same table with Constance Stevens and Miles Burton, the senior from Weston High School. Her instant suspicion was that the situation had been arranged by Jerry at Laurie's request. Although she had only surmised this, at least part of her conjecture was quite true. Out of sympathy for Laurie, good-natured Jerry had favored him to this extent. Hal also had privately rallied his boy friends to the cause by saying to them sub rosa: "You fellows had better keep Mignon busy dancing. Are you on?" Mignon's swift rise in popularity as a dancer proved that they were. This, however, she did not at first suspect. Her insatiable vanity prevented her from seeing through that ruse.

It was not until supper had ended and the danc-

ing had been resumed that light began to dawn upon her. It came with the dismaying knowledge that Laurie had not been near her for six dances. Three of them he had danced with Constance Stevens. Following on that discovery came the disagreeable suspicion that perhaps he had persuaded his friends to help him out. She was by no means anxious to believe this. Nevertheless, the bare idea of it plunged her into a most unpleasant mood. Too wise even to intimate to the young man that she disapproved of his tactics, she began to look about for someone on whom she might vent her spite.

It may be said to Laurie's credit that he was entirely innocent of the crimes she attributed to him. He knew nothing whatever of Jerry's and Hal's private campaign for his benefit. Noting that Mignon was receiving plenty of attention from his friends, he very naturally gravitated toward Constance. In reality none of the young folks except Mignon looked upon the broom episode as being other than a huge joke. Her sentimental preference for Laurie, which she knew was not reciprocated, caused her to clutch at any straw that would win her his attentions.

Gradually becoming convinced of her cavalier's perfidy, Mignon crossly snubbed two Weston High boys who asked her to dance and switched haughtily toward a corner of the room where a big punch bowl of fruit lemonade awaited the thirsty. As she

neared it her elfish eyes began to sparkle with malicious purpose. Standing beside it was Lucy Warner, her small face aglow with half envious delight as she watched the dancers. Unfortunately for Lucy, she did not know how to dance.

"Having a good time?" inquired Mignon patronizingly, as she toyed with the handle of the silver ladle preparatory to filling a cup with lemonade.

"Oh, yes." Forgetting the disapproval of Mignon which Marjorie Dean's recent explanation concerning the secretaryship had caused her to feel, Lucy answered almost eagerly. The next instant she stiffened perceptibly, and started to move away from Mignon.

"Wait a minute," ordered Mignon, quick to note the change. "What's the matter? Are you angry with me? I'm sure you have no reason to be."

Remembering Marjorie's injunction not to allow herself to be drawn into a quarrel with the French girl, Lucy hesitated. "You will have to excuse me," she said quietly. "I am going home now."

"Oh, are you? That's too bad. I was just about to tell you something. Never mind. Perhaps it wouldn't be wise to tell you."

"What do you mean?" Lucy's green eyes gleamed surprised displeasure. The suspicious side of her nature, however, clamored for information. She knew that she ought to go on about her business, but curiosity stayed her feet.

"Oh, nothing much." Mignon shrugged her shoulders. "It was merely about something that happened last year. I've changed my mind. I am not going to tell you. You know it's forbidden among the Lookouts to gossip. I'll just give you a piece of advice. As a Lookout, it would pay you to keep your eyes open. There are some very deceitful girls in Sanford High School. One of them in particular pretends to be your friend. I should advise you to be careful what you tell her. She is not to be trusted."

"What do you mean?" Lucy again demanded, with a deep scowl. She wondered if Mignon's last insinuation meant Marjorie Dean.

"Use your eyes and ears and you'll find out for yourself." With an amused laugh, Mignon set the cup she held on the table and walked away, her spite for the moment satisfied. She had managed to plant a seed of discord in Lucy's inflammable brain. She hoped with all her heart that it had sprouted and would grow rapidly.

That it had not died became evident in the rather reserved farewells which Lucy made to Jerry, her hostess, and several of the girls. Among them was Marjorie who wondered a little at the other girl's chilly demeanor. Earlier in the evening Lucy had been radiant. Always charitable in thought, Marjorie laid it to the fact that Lucy was perhaps a trifle tired. Yet the almost hostile stare of her pe-

culiarly-colored eyes haunted Marjorie for the remainder of the evening.

Twelve o'clock marked the wind-up of the Hallowe'en party. By a quarter after that hour the young revelers had begun to troop down the front steps of the house, their gay good nights echoing on the still air. Greatly to her joy, Lawrence Armitage dutifully inquired of Mignon if her runabout were parked outside, or if she expected the La Salle's chauffeur to come for her. On replying that her chauffeur would be waiting at the gate with the runabout, she was even better pleased to hear him politely announce his wish to see her safely to it.

Mignon was doubly elated by the fact that Constance and Marjorie were directly behind her. Mr. Dean had come to take both girls home, as Constance was following her usual after-party custom of spending the night with Marjorie. The French girl was quite ready to set up an out-cry over the non-appearance of her runabout. She was anxious that Constance in particular should see her calmly appropriate both Laurie and his roadster.

Her black eyes blazed with triumph as she surveyed the little row of automobiles which stretched itself along a portion of the street in front of the Macys' residence. Her runabout was not among them.

"Why, where is my car?" she cried out in well-

simulated dismay. "Isn't that provoking? That stupid William has misunderstood that he was to come for me. It's just like him to make such a mistake! What am I to do?" Mignon rolled appealing eyes at Laurie.

Sheer vexation sealed Laurie's lips for an instant. He knew only too well what courtesy demanded him to do, and he rebelled at the thought. Mignon's loud outcry had already attracted the attention of a group of guests who stood surrounding Hal and Jerry Macy. The young host and hostess had strolled to the gate with their friends to wish them a last good night. Every pair of eyes was now centered on Mignon.

Drawing a long breath, Laurie reluctantly came to the French girl's rescue. "I will take you home——" he began with polite aloofness.

"There comes your runabout, Mignon," called Muriel Harding sweetly. Her alert eyes had spied it as, with William at the wheel, it passed under the arc light and made rapid approach.

Muriel's announcement elicited no response from Mignon. She stood motionless on the walk, her gaze fixed fiercely upon the undependable William as he turned the runabout and halted it just ahead of the other cars. Under the glare of the gate lights the varying expressions of her stormy face told their own story. With the realization of defeat came the need for instant action. William was already mov-

ing toward the group of young folks. He was looking for her. She must intercept him before he came too close to them.

Electrified by the fear of exposure, she darted toward the chauffeur, who, glimpsing his charge, strode forward. She was just a second too late. "I got your 'phone message not to come for you, Miss Mignon," he boomed mercilessly, "but your father just got home and he says that I was to drive over after you just the same."

Taken at a complete disadvantage, Mignon could only mutter an embarrassed good night to the outwardly grave, but inwardly gleeful Laurie. Ignoring the amused group of boys and girls, she flounced into the runabout without a word to the innocent betrayer of her carefully-concocted scheme. During the drive home, however, she shed tears of heart-felt rage against her father's untimely interference. She vowed vengefully that he should pay for it, thereby proving conclusively that, when it came to a matter of a grudge, she was no respecter of personages.

CHAPTER XII

A DISCOURAGED REFORMER

DESPITE the late hour at which members of the Lookout Club had retired on the previous night, nine o'clock Saturday morning saw them gathered at the day nursery, for a final survey of it before the house warming began, which was scheduled to commence at two o'clock that afternoon. As Saturday was a half-holiday for the mill folks, the girls had chosen the time of the opening with a view to giving the mothers of the children, who would partake of its hospitality, an opportunity to inspect the nursery and offer the names of their little ones for registration. A buffet luncheon, contributed by the mothers of the Lookouts was to be one of the features of the occasion, and Mrs. Macy, Mrs. Dean, Mrs. Harding and Miss Susan Allison were to act as patronesses. Mignon La Salle was the only member of the club who did not put in an appearance. Why she had chosen to absent herself no one of the Lookouts knew nor did they greatly care.

"I guess Mignon feels rather queer about facing us to-day after what happened last night," Jerry Macy confided to Marjorie, when the close of the morning brought no sign of the French girl.

"I was truly sorry for her," Marjorie answered

with evident sincerity. "She must have been terribly embarrassed."

"Not she," sniffed Jerry. "She was probably mad as hops, though, to think her scheme fell flat. She must have telephoned her house while we were all upstairs dancing. It was silly in her to do a thing like that. It's funny, though, what a crush she's always had on Laurie. She's cared about him ever since her grammar school days, but he has never liked her. He's awfully fond of Connie, though."

"I know it." Marjorie smiled. "Somehow one never thinks of either Connie or Laurie as being foolish or sentimental."

"That's because Connie is so sensible and nice about Laurie," explained Jerry. "She just treats him as a boy friend and makes him understand it. Laurie is different from Hal and the Crane. He's a musician and has associated a good deal with older men. That makes him seem ever so much older than he really is. Naturally he is more serious and grown-up. He and Hal are almost the same age, but Hal seems younger than Laurie. Danny Seabrooke and the Crane are more Hal's speed, but Hal thinks there's no one quite like Laurie."

"Nearly all the Weston High boys are splendid," praised Marjorie. Her glance happening to stray to Lucy Warner who stood across the room, talking to Muriel Harding, she said anxiously: "Jerry, do you think anyone said anything last night to

Lucy to hurt her feelings? Just before she went home I tried to talk to her and she hardly answered me. She hasn't more than spoken to me this morning, either."

"She was pretty icy to me when she said good night," returned Jerry unconcernedly. "That's just her way. She's like February weather, always thawing and freezing. I wouldn't worry about her moods. You certainly have been nice to her. Very likely she felt a little out of things last night because she didn't know how to dance. We ought to teach her. Go and propose it to her, Marjorie. Muriel has just left her. Now is your chance. I'll stay here. You can talk to her better alone."

Suiting the action to the word, Marjorie crossed the room to Lucy. "I've something very special to ask you, Lucy," she said, adopting a casual tone.

Lucy frowned portentously. "What is it?" she questioned in cool, terse fashion. Mignon's treacherous counsel still rang in her ears. Her moody frown changed to a flash of interest, however, as Marjorie stated that she and Jerry were anxious to teach her to dance. Something in Marjorie's gay, gracious manner sent a swift rush of shamed color to Lucy's white cheeks. Marjorie had befriended her and she had repaid her kindness by allowing suspicion to warp her belief in this delightful girl.

"I'd love to learn to dance," she heard herself saying heartily. Then on sudden impulse she con-

tinued almost pleadingly, "You are really my friend, aren't you, Marjorie?"

"Why, of course!" The answer conveyed absolute truth. "What makes you ask me that, Lucy?" Marjorie eyed her steadily.

Lucy's color rose higher. "I'm glad you asked me that. I wanted to tell you something, but I didn't know whether I'd better. It sounds gossipy." In a few words she related what Mignon had said to her. "I shouldn't have listened to Mignon," she apologized. "I tried to leave her, but she kept on talking."

Patent vexation held Marjorie speechless for an instant. When she spoke it was in a firm, almost stern manner. "I have only one thing to say, Lucy. You must not allow Mignon to make you feel that I am not your friend. Please remember that I am and hope always to be. I haven't the least idea what she meant by saying that she knew me to be deceitful. She evidently meant me though she didn't mention my name. I despise deceit, and I have always been straightforward with you."

"I believe you," Lucy earnestly assured her. "Hereafter I shall have nothing whatever to say to Mignon."

"You must do as you think best about that. I am glad you came to me frankly. If you are in doubt at any time about me, please come to me and say so. Misunderstandings are dreadful." Mar-

jorie's mind had harked back to the memory of the cloud that had once shadowed hers and Mary Raymond's friendship.

On the way home to luncheon that day, in company with Jerry, Irma and Constance, she was unusually quiet. Her thoughts reverted gloomily to the conversation between herself and Lucy Warner. It had shown her plainly that no amount of club ethics could stop Mignon's spiteful tongue. Her crafty attack on Lucy was merely a beginning. Into what sort of tangle her mischief-making proclivities might yet involve the Lookouts was a question which time alone would answer.

The pleasant excitement of the afternoon went far toward banishing Marjorie's dark forebodings. The house warming was a signal success, thanks to the grateful eagerness with which the residents of the mill district received the kindly effort made in their behalf. Altogether thirty youngsters were enrolled as members of the day nursery, and their mothers showed a shy, pathetic pride and pleasure in the new movement which greatly touched their young hostesses. They did hungry justice to the dainty luncheon prepared for them, and, their diffidence gradually vanishing under the hospitable treatment they were receiving, they talked and laughed in friendly fashion with the patronesses and the Lookouts.

Greatly to the surprise of her fellow members,

Mignon deigned to lend her elaborately-dressed self to the house warming. It was well into the afternoon when she appeared, haughty and supercilious. As the majority of the humble guests knew her by sight, her arrival had a somewhat dampening effect upon them. The knowledge that she was the daughter of one of Sanford's wealthiest residents rather over-awed them, and her grandiose manner served to deepen the effect. Although she was fairly affable to her schoolmates, a hint of scorn lurked in her roving black eyes, which told its own story to those who best understood her ways. No one of the band of earnest workers honestly regretted her departure which occurred not more than half an hour after her arrival.

Before five o'clock the humble guests had departed with much handshaking and friendly bobbing of heads, leaving the house to the Lookouts. The patronesses left shortly afterward and the bevy of girls turned to with commendable energy to spend a merry hour setting the nursery to rights.

"Let's sit down at the table in these cunning little chairs and have a consultation," proposed Muriel. "I am really tired out. This has been a strenuous afternoon, not to mention last night."

"Not for me," was Jerry's discouraged comment. "One of those playhouse affairs would last about ten seconds if I attempted to sit in it."

"We'd better be moving toward home," suggested

Daisy Griggs. "It's almost six o'clock. I am going to a musicale this evening and I mustn't be late for it." Daisy made a determined march for the stairs, and disappeared in search of hat and coat.

"Daisy is a very energetic person," laughed Irma. "I am going home, eat my dinner and go straight to bed. I've been sleepy all day."

"So have I," complained Rita Talbot. "I am glad I don't have to be a spook the year round. Spooks must lose a lot of sleep."

"I suppose they must. I never interviewed a real one, so I can't say positively," giggled Susan.

Following Daisy's example the Lookouts trooped upstairs in search of their various belongings, exchanging light nonsense as they went. Soon afterward they descended ready for the street. Marjorie, Jerry and Constance lingered while Jerry locked the door, depositing the key in a secret refuge of its own, the location of which was known to the woman who had been engaged to come early Monday morning in order to receive her small charges.

"I wish you and Connie would come over to our house to-night," invited Jerry. "Hal, Laurie and Dan will be on the job, I mean on the scene. Hal has a brilliant idea that he thinks might interest the Lookouts. He won't tell me what it is, either. Unless you two are kindly disposed enough to come over, I'll have to take my curiosity out in guessing."

"I'll have to ask my superior officer," demurred Marjorie. "Captain may think that I ought to stay at home this evening. I'll do some expert coaxing just to please you, Jerry."

"My aunt may also be of the same mind about me," said Constance. "Still, I think I can come."

"Saved!" Jerry clasped her fat hands in exaggerated thankfulness. "I see I stand some chance of having my curiosity satisfied."

"Can't you telephone your aunt and stay to dinner with me, Connie?" begged Marjorie.

"Of course she can. That's a good idea. If your aunt says 'yes' then so will Mrs. Dean," calculated crafty Jerry. "As Professor Fontaine beautifully puts it, 'We weel conseedaire the mattaire as settled."

Mention of the little professor reminded Constance and Marjorie of an unusually long translation for Monday recitation, at which neither of them had looked. The talk immediately drifted into school channels to continue in that strain until Jerry left them.

After saying good-bye to her, Marjorie and Constance strolled silently along for a little.

"Marjorie," Constance's clear enunciation startled her chum from brief reverie. "I am afraid we can never be of much help to Mignon."

Marjorie flashed a half-startled glance toward Constance. She wondered what new quirk in Mig-

non's behavior had occasioned this observation. "Why?" was all she said.

"I've been waiting for a chance to tell you something I heard this afternoon. It was Gertrude Aldine who mentioned it. She said that Mignon told her last night that Jerry had hired Veronica to come to the party and do that shadow dance."

"*Hired* Veronica?" Marjorie cried out in nettled amazement. "That is perfectly ridiculous and not true. But how did Mignon happen to know that it was Veronica who danced? Only Jerry, Hal, Laurie, you and I knew it. Even I didn't recognize her on the screen. I don't see how Mignon could have."

"She must have, or else——" Constance paused significantly.

"Or else what?"

"I hate to say it, but Mignon must somehow have overheard you and Jerry when you were talking to Veronica in the back parlor. I saw her leave the ball room soon after you girls did. I saw her come back again after you had returned. I didn't pay any particular heed to it then. You see I didn't know about Veronica until you told me last night after the dance. Even then I didn't connect her with you girls, although I guessed from what the La Salles' chauffeur said to Mignon that she must have gone downstairs and telephoned her home." A tiny smile played about Constance's lips as she

recalled Mignon's defeat. "When Gertrude mentioned what Mignon had said about Veronica, the whole thing flashed across me in a twinkling. Gertrude promised not to tell anyone else. I know *she* won't. But Mignon will circulate it throughout the school. Of course she won't mention, though, how she came by the information."

"It was contemptible in her if she really did spy upon us," was Marjorie's indignant outburst. "I don't see how she could have managed to, though. I didn't see a soul downstairs while we were there. If she does gossip it in school, Veronica won't care. She will only laugh."

"But Jerry will care," reminded Constance gravely. "As soon as she hears it she will go to Mignon and make a fuss about it. You know what she said that day at Sargent's. She meant it, too. We can't allow our president to resign from the club."

"We will tell Jerry about it tonight," decreed Marjorie. "It is better for her to hear it from us than from someone else. She will be cross, of course, but she won't resign. Something will have to be done about Mignon, though. She's not keeping her word of honor to the club. This is not the first offense. I can't explain what I mean by that because I promised a certain person I wouldn't tell what she told me. Someone will have to go to her and remind her of her duty to the club. If she

keeps on saying such hateful things about others, outsiders will form a bad opinion of us all."

"As president, it's Jerry's duty to tell her," asserted Constance. "No doubt she will wish to do it. That's just where the trouble lies. She will be apt to tell Mignon very bluntly that she must either stop gossiping or resign from the club. Mignon will simply snap her fingers at Jerry and Jerry herself will resign rather than be in the same club with Mignon."

"Very likely," nodded Marjorie. Constance's theory entirely coincided with her own. "If we talk things over with Jerry beforehand it may make a good deal of difference. Although I wouldn't say it to anyone but you or Captain, I've lately come to the conclusion that trying to help Mignon is a waste of time, energy and peace of mind. It's like building a sand castle on the beach. Before one has time to finish it the sea washes over it and sweeps it away. If it hadn't been for that affair at Riverview last year, I would never have troubled myself about her again. Do you realize, Connie, that this is the fourth year that we have had to contend with that girl's mischief-making?" Marjorie's question quivered with righteous resentment.

"Yes, but she has never been really successful in a single piece of mischief she has planned," reminded Constance. "She's caused us a good deal of unhappiness, but in the end she has been the one

to suffer defeat. It generally happens that way with persons like her. They may seem to succeed for a while, but always there comes a day when they have to pay for the trouble they make others. As I have said to you before, I am sorry for Mignon. Honestly, I don't think we can ever help her much, but she might better be in the club than out of it."

"Then you think that no matter what she may do we ought still to be patient with her and make allowances?" Marjorie's query indicated profound respect for Constance's broad-minded opinion. It made her feel as though her brief flash of resentment of Mignon had been unworthy of herself.

"Yes;" came the unhesitating reply. "What else is there to do? You and I, in particular, made ourselves responsible when we insisted that Mignon should be asked to join the Lookouts. As good soldiers we have no right to shirk that responsibility."

"I am not going to shirk it." Marjorie squared her shoulders with an energy that bespoke fresh purpose. "After all I said to the girls about Mignon joining the club, it was cowardly in me to complain so bitterly about her. You've made me realize all over again that we ought to look out for Mignon, because it's the right thing to do, not because of our promise to her father."

"I'll stand by you." Stopping in the middle of the walk, Constance offered her hand to Marjorie in pledge of her offer to stand by.

Both girls laughed as they went through with the little ceremony of shaking hands, little realizing that their compact would, later, turn out to be no laughing matter.

CHAPTER XIII

JERRY DECLARES HERSELF

"WELL, here we are again!" jubilantly announced Danny Seabrooke, executing a few fantastic steps about the Macys' living room by way of expressing his approval of the sextette of young people gathered there.

"Yes, here we are," echoed Laurie Armitage with a fervor that indicated his deep satisfaction. Seated on the davenport beside Constance Stevens, his blue eyes rested on her with infinite content. This second gathering at the Macys' was quite to his liking.

"This amiable crowd reminds me of a verse in the third reader that I used to admire," remarked Jerry humorously. "It went something like this:

> "'Let joy be ours, we're all at home,
> To-night let no cold stranger come.
> May gentle peace assert her power
> And kind affection rule the hour.'"

Jerry recited this gem in a high, affected voice, ending with a giggle.

"Very touching," commented Danny, "and very true. We are, indeed, a happy, hilarious, harmonious, harmless, hopeful, hospitable band."

"After all," declared Marjorie, "there's nothing quite like the Invincible Six, is there? I had a gorgeous time at the Hallowe'en party last night, but these little sessions of ours are so jolly."

"Hurrah! Marjorie's given us a name!" cheered Hal Macy. "Hereafter we'll call ourselves the Invincible Six. It's a good name, and has a lot of snap to it. It means we are a combination that can't be downed."

"Of course we can't," agreed Danny Seabrooke glibly. "No combination of which I am a part can be downed. Hence the term 'invincible.' It's lucky for all of you that you have me to lean on. Understand, I speak merely in figurative language. I have no intention of becoming an actual prop for two big fellows like Hal Macy and Laurie Armitage."

"Don't worry," jeered Hal, "we wouldn't take a chance on you. An unstable prop—you know the rest."

"I know nothing whatever about it," returned Danny with dignity. "Furthermore, I don't wish to know."

"'Where ignorance is bliss——'" quoted Hal tantalizingly.

"'Tis folly to waste time spouting proverbs," finished Danny, his wide grin in evidence.

"Stop squabbling, both of you," commanded Jerry. "One would think to hear you that the March Hare and the Mad Hatter had both come to life. What about that wonderful idea of yours, Hal? It's time you quit being so stingy."

"Keep Dan quiet and I promise to be generous," was the teasing stipulation.

"Come and sit beside me, Danny," invited Marjorie with a roguish glance toward the talkative Daniel.

The latter immediately moved his chair with a wild flourish. Planting it beside Marjorie's he settled himself in it with a triumphant flop. "There's nothing like proper appreciation," he declared, beaming owlishly at Hal, who merely smiled tolerantly at this fling.

"Go ahead, Hal," directed Laurie. "Marjorie's beneficent influence on Dan will keep him quiet for at least five minutes."

"All right." Hitching his chair about until he faced the interested group, Hal began. "You know, of course, that most of the Weston High fellows belong to the Sanford Guards. You know, too, that it is just a high school company and has always furnished its own equipment. Just now the company needs a lot of stuff that it can't afford to buy. A few of us could club together and buy it, but that

wouldn't suit some of the boys. We ought to try and raise the money in some more democratic way. Now you girls have a club and would like to do something to raise money for it. So I thought between the Guards and the club we could get up some sort of entertainment together that the Sanfordites would turn out to and spend their money. That's the first half of the idea. The second half is the show itself. Why couldn't we give a big Campfire in the Armory, and make a lot of money?"

"A Campfire? I never heard of one. What sort of show is it, Hal?" Marjorie leaned forward in her chair, her changeful features alive with curious interest.

"It's a new one on me!" exclaimed Jerry. "I mean, I never heard of a Campfire, either," was her hasty amendment.

"A Campfire is a kind of big military show," explained Hal. "I went to one once in Buffalo. It's like a bazaar, only instead of booths, there are tents all the way around the Armory except at one end where there's a little stage. The center of the floor is left free for dancing. Different things are sold in the tents. Confectionery and ices and postcards or anything one cares to have. That would be the part you girls would have to see to. We could have a show and a dance afterward. If we gave it for three nights running we'd make quite a lot of

money. Half of it would go to the Lookouts and the other half to the Guards."

"You've certainly got a head on your shoulders, Harold. I forgive you for those disrespectful proverbs." Danny regarded Hal with grinning magnanimity. "I promise faithfully to be one of the special features at the Woodfire, Coalfire, Nofire—pardon me; Campfire."

"I'm not sure whether you'll be there," retorted Hal. "It will depend entirely upon your behavior."

"Oh, I'll be there; never fear" was the airy assurance.

"It's the very nicest kind of idea," approved Marjorie warmly. "I am sure that we could work together and carry it out successfully. It means a lot of work, though. When could we have it?" This as an afterthought.

"Thanksgiving would be a pretty good time for us," proposed Jerry. "We have no school after Wednesday of Thanksgiving week. But there's football. You boys will be busy with that."

"Not this year." Hal shook his head. "Laurie and I are out of it. We've had three years of football and so we thought we'd give some of the other fellows our chance. Having to drill so much lately at the Armory has kept us both busy. Then, too, Laurie wanted all the extra time he could get to work on his new opera."

This last information brought a chorus of sur-

prised exclamations from four young throats. Even Constance was not in possession of this news.

"Now who is stingy?" cried Jerry, looking playful accusation at Laurie.

"Oh, I intended to tell you folks about it tonight," defended the young composer, flushing. "Hal merely got the start of me. There isn't much to tell so far. I have a vague inspiration which I'm trying to translate into music. I don't know yet whether or not it will be worth while."

"What are you going to name your opera?" inquired practical Jerry. "What is it about?"

"I—that is——" Laurie showed further signs of embarrassment. "I haven't exactly decided on a name for it. I'd rather not say anything about it for a while. Later on, I'll be pleased to answer both your questions, Jerry."

"More mystery!" Jerry threw up her hands in comical disapproval. "Our senior year seems to be full of it. There's the mystery of Veronica, for instance, and——"

"She is a rather mysterious person," broke in Laurie. "Last night while she was waiting to do that shadow dance, I stood beside her so as to be ready to take her broom and that stuffed cat she carried on her shoulder after she made her bow on the screen. When she had finished the dance she slipped away from me before I had a chance to congratulate her on her dancing. I thought of

course she'd stay for the party. I was surprised when you told me, Jerry, that she wouldn't hear to it. She seems like a mighty nice girl. Strange, but I could almost swear that I'd met her before last night."

"You've probably seen her going to or coming from school," remarked Constance. "She is often with us."

"Oh, I've noticed her with you girls, and I've always had that same peculiar impression about her. The moment she first spoke to me last night it deepened." Laurie knit his brows in a puzzled effort to bring back the circumstances of some possibly former meeting with Veronica.

A gleam of sudden inspiration shot into Jerry's round eyes. "Perhaps you may have met Veronica before last night, Laurie," she said eagerly. "Think hard and see if you can't recall the meeting. It might throw a little light on some of the things that puzzle us."

"Sorry I can't oblige you," he declared ruefully after due reflection, "but I can't remember ever having met her previous to last night. It must be a case of her resembling somebody else I've met."

"Jerry will never be satisfied until she knows all the whys and wherefores of Veronica," laughed Marjorie. "Never mind, Jerry. Some day we may find out that our great mystery amounts to very little after all. By that I don't mean that we are

likely to be disappointed in Ronny. It's quite probable that we don't understand her now as we may later on. To go back to the Campfire, we had better decide to-night when we are to have it. I think Thanksgiving would be the best time. I imagine the other Lookouts beside ourselves will think so, too."

The subject of the Campfire again taken up, the six friends entered into an avid planning for it. The three boys were reasonably sure that the project would find favor with the Sanford Guards, to which military organization they all belonged. The three girls were equally certain that it would meet the approval of their club associates. Their interest centered on the delightful scheme, both Marjorie and Constance entirely forgot the disagreeable news which they had previously agreed must be broken to Jerry.

It was well toward eleven o'clock when tardy recollection of it swept over Marjorie. The sextette were in the midst of a delectable collation of hot chocolate, sandwiches and French cakes, of which they had despoiled the indefatigable tea wagon, when the remembrance of Mignon's latest iniquity popped into her mind. Luckily for her, Jerry was seated in the chair nearest to her. Under cover of one of Danny Seabrooke's lively sallies, Marjorie leaned toward Jerry and said softly: "I have something to tell you, Jeremiah. I thought I

might have a chance to say it to-night, but perhaps I'd better wait until to-morrow."

"'Never put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day,'" was the cheerful reminder. "Wait until we have finished the spread. You can help me trundle the tea wagon out of here and into the kitchen. Then we can talk. I'll make a loud and special clamor for the pleasure of your assistance. Does Connie know what's on your mind? I don't want to seem rude to her."

"Yes, she will understand," nodded Marjorie. "She'd rather I'd tell you. She can entertain the boys until we come back."

Not long after this guarded conversation took place Jerry made good her promise. "Lend me a hand with this tea wagon, Marjorie," she innocently requested. "You boys needn't trouble yourselves. Sit still and look pleasant and Connie will do the honors while Marjorie and I do the work. Besides, two's company," she added, with good-humored significance.

"Don't mention it," affably retorted Danny Seabrooke. "You have my permission to take charge of the tea wagon. Once it looked good to me. Now that it holds nothing but empty dishes, take it away quickly."

Hal and Laurie obediently kept their seats. They were accustomed to Jerry's blunt orders and knew that their services were not desired. Constance

flashed Marjorie a quick, inquiring glance, which the latter answered with an almost imperceptible nod.

"See how they mind me," observed Jerry, chuckling, as the two girls left the room, trundling the tea wagon between them. Entering the kitchen she gave it a final impatient shove away from her. "You're out of it," she commented as it rumbled along the smooth floor with a protesting jingle of dishes. "You have the floor, Marjorie. What's the latest? As you don't look very joyful, I wonder if our dear Mignon has been busy again. Something seems to tell me that I am not a thousand miles off in my guess. After last night, nothing she has said or done can surprise me much. She certainly got nicely fooled, didn't she? What I'd like to know is, When did she telephone her house?"

"That is precisely what I am going to tell you," stated Marjorie in deliberate tones. "But, first, I want you to promise me, Jerry, that you will try not to be too much upset by what I'm going to say."

"That's a pretty hard promise to make." Jerry eyed her friend speculatively. "I'll be as calm as I can, but no calmer."

Not greatly assured by Jerry's half promise, Marjorie plunged bravely into the task that confronted her. Before she had ended, Jerry's good-natured countenance showed signs of storm.

"Of all the mischief-makers," she sputtered,

"Mignon leads the van! She's gone just a little too far this time; The idea of her slipping around behind our backs to listen to what didn't concern her. I won't have her in the club. As president I have some say about it. I shall call a special meeting of the Lookouts, tell them what she's done, and recommend that she be dropped from the club. We can't trust her. She's broken the Golden Rule a dozen times at least since she became a member of the Lookouts. Either she must leave the club or else I shall leave it," she threatened.

"I was afraid you'd say that. Understand, I agree with you that she deserves to be asked to resign. But we mustn't ask her to, and you must not resign, either, Jerry. If you did, it might break up the club. We've too much at stake now to begin quarreling. We wouldn't be helping Mignon by asking her to resign. We'd only be responsible for making her more dishonorable than ever. Veronica won't mind her gossip."

"Maybe she won't," snapped Jerry, "but it's not fair to the Lookouts to allow Mignon to do and say things that will cause them to be criticized. We've got to take some pretty severe action about it or be set down as in her class."

"That's what I am coming to," continued Marjorie. "The time has come when Mignon must be made to understand that she will have to live up to the Golden Rule. As president of the club, you

ought to be the one to tell her, but I am afraid——"

"I'll tell her," emphasized Jerry grimly, "and in a way that she won't relish. Maybe then she'll be glad to resign of her own accord. If she won't, then I shall."

"That's just the point," broke in Marjorie mournfully. "She won't resign of her own accord. If you undertake to tell her she will be horrid to you. Then you'll lose your temper and—we won't have any president."

"I guess that's so." Jerry frowned fiercely. Marjorie's wistful ending had its effect on her, however. "Still, who's going to tell her if I don't? You can imagine what will happen if Muriel undertakes it. It will be like touching a match to gun powder. Susan has no time for her. Irma's altogether too gentle. Harriet's no match for Mignon. Connie—well, Connie might be able to put it over. I doubt it, though. Mignon is so jealous of her on account of her singing and Laurie. She wouldn't listen to Connie. Afterward she'd be sure to start a story that Connie tried to put her out of the club because of Laurie's attention to her at the Hallowe'en party. There's only——"

"Marjorie Dean left to tell her," supplemented Marjorie quietly.

"You've said it," nodded Jerry. "You are the only one of us who is likely to make an impression upon her. She doesn't like you, but she's afraid of

you. She knows, even though she won't admit it, that you are miles her superior. I'd rather be the one to go to her, but you seem to think it wouldn't be wise. I guess you know what you're talking about. One of us is it. If you feel you'd like to do the censuring act, then go ahead and do it."

"I don't feel that I'd *like* to do any such thing." Marjorie's answer conveyed strong disinclination. "It's this way, though. You and Connie and I know more about Mignon than the others know. That's why it would be best for one of us to have a talk with her. If all three of us went to her together, it would be more humiliating for her than if only one of us went. I'd rather it wouldn't be Connie. Mignon would gossip about her afterward." Marjorie paused. She disliked to remind Jerry of her short temper.

"I'll tell you what we'll do." Jerry rose gallantly to the distasteful interview in prospect. "You and I will form a committee of two and face Mignon together. You can do the talking and I'll simply go along to see that she doesn't gobble you up. I promise faithfully to be as dumb as a clam. But only for this one time. Just to please you, Marjorie, I'll agree to let her escape what she deserves with a warning. But never again. If, after you've laid down the law to her, she starts any more gossip, then there will be one face missing among the Lookouts. If it isn't hers, it will certainly be mine."

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNREPENTANT SINNER

HAVING committed themselves to the unenviable duty of censorship, neither Marjorie nor Jerry had any intention of wavering in the performance of it. The following Monday they met and agreed to pay Mignon a call that evening. They also agreed not to announce to her beforehand their purposed visit to her. It would be wisest to hazard the chance of finding her at home.

Their hearts beat a trifle faster, however, when at eight o'clock that evening they proceeded up the wide stone walk leading to the La Salles' veranda. In just what fashion Mignon, were she at home, would receive the counsel they had decided must be imparted to her, was something which they could not foretell.

"Br-rr!" shivered Jerry as Marjorie pressed the electric bell. "I hope she isn't at home."

"I don't." Marjorie spoke firmly. "I'd rather see her to-night and have it over with."

The opening of the door by a maid cut short further conversation between them. She ushered them into the drawing room with the information that "Miss Mignon" was at home. Inviting them to be

seated, she disappeared to acquaint the French girl with their arrival.

Hardly had they seated themselves when the sound of Mignon's voice raised in sharp question floated down to them from the head of the wide hall staircase. Followed the patter of light descending feet, announcing to them that the dread moment was approaching.

"Good evening." Mignon's black brows lifted themselves ironically as she beheld her unexpected callers. "This is really a surprise!" Her elfish eyes roved challengingly from one girl to the other.

"Good evening, Mignon." Marjorie's calm salutation betrayed nothing of her inner trepidation.

"How are you, Mignon?" was all Jerry said. She, too, had sensed hostility in her hostess' satirical exclamation.

"I was taking a look at my French lesson for to-morrow when I heard the door-bell. French, of course, is very easy for me. I need hardly to glance at a lesson before I know it." Mignon's sharp chin raised itself a trifle as she made this boast.

"Yes; you have the advantage of the rest of us," conceded Marjorie honestly. "French is quite hard for me. The poetry is so difficult to translate."

"Were you girls at the nursery this afternoon?" inquired Mignon suavely. She was wondering mightily what had occasioned their call.

"No. It was Muriel's and Irma's turn to go this afternoon. Jerry and I are to take ours on Friday. What afternoon are you to have, and which one of the girls is to go with you? Irma has the list of names. I haven't seen it," Marjorie added.

Mignon shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, I was asked to be on duty Thursday afternoon. I didn't inquire who was to help me amuse those tiresome slum youngsters." She tossed her head with elaborate unconcern. A scornful smile played about her lips. "It really doesn't matter, though. I shall not be there. I am going out of town on Wednesday evening and shall not return until late Thursday night. I must tell Irma not to count on me this week."

An awkward silence followed this announcement. Jerry frowned but held her peace. Marjorie's brown eyes showed a faint sparkle of indignation. Mignon's slighting reference to the nursery children angered her. No trace of her displeasure lurked in her voice, however, as she said evenly: "I am willing to take your place on Thursday, Mignon."

"Suit yourself." Mignon's shoulders again went into ready play. "I imagine you girls will find that day nursery a white elephant. It will cost the club more time and money than it is worth. It will keep the Lookouts hustling to supply funds for it. The sum of money we now have in the treasury won't last long at the rate it is being spent."

"We have thought of a way to put more money in our treasury," was Marjorie's quiet assurance.

Jerry's round blue eyes focussed themselves upon her friend, amazement in their depths. Surely Marjorie did not intend to put Mignon in possession of the Campfire project before the rest of the Lookouts knew it? Marjorie, however, had been visited by a swift flash of inspiration. In view of the prospective Campfire, Mignon might receive the rebuke about to be delivered in a more chastened spirit than she would otherwise exhibit. She was not likely to cut off her nose to spite her face.

"What do you mean?" Alert interest leaped into Mignon's face. "What is your new plan?"

Marjorie outlined briefly the money-making scheme which Hal Macy had conceived.

"And will there be a show every night?"

"Yes; Laurie Armitage is going to arrange a little revue."

"Is he really!" Mignon leaned forward, an eager figure of anticipation. "Do you know who is to take part in it?"

"Nothing definite has been decided yet." Marjorie could scarcely repress a smile. Mignon's question patently indicated what was in her mind.

"I wonder if he will ask——" Tardily realizing that she was betraying undue eagerness, Mignon checked herself.

She had said enough, however, to give Marjorie

the desired opportunity. "I think Laurie ought to ask you to take part in his revue, Mignon. You sang beautifully in the Rebellious Princess. I suppose he would rather choose the girls for it from among the Lookouts. But he said last night that he was going to be very sure that those he asked to help him would work together without friction."

"Are you accusing me of being a trouble-maker?" Mignon sprang to her feet, her black eyes snapping with anger. "I want you to understand——"

"Please allow me to go on with what I was about to say," came the dignified interruption.

"I will not——" began Mignon. Her furious tone changing to one of sullenness, she muttered, "Well, say it."

"I know you won't like to hear this, but it must be said. Laurie intends to ask Veronica Browning to take part in the revue. She dances very cleverly and is sure to please the audience. I know that you don't like Veronica, simply because she is poor," Marjorie went on bravely. "I know, too, that you have said unkind things about her to others. I have learned that you circulated the report that she was paid to come to Jerry's Hallowe'en party and dance. This was not the case. She offered to dance at Jerry's of her own free will. She did not remain for the party, simply because she did not wish to do so. If you take part in the revue and Veronica agrees to be in it, too, then you will have to treat her with

courtesy and make no slighting remarks about her behind her back. Should you do so, and were Laurie to hear of it, he would be very angry."

"That for your servant girl!" Mignon snapped derisive fingers. "I shall say whatever I please to her or about her."

"Then you are not a true Lookout," condemned Marjorie sternly. "Every time you make an unkind remark about Veronica or in fact anyone else, you are breaking the Golden Rule. We all promised to live up to it. As an officer of the club, you are especially bound to do so. I came here to-night on purpose to remind you of that promise. It is not fair in you to lay the Lookouts open to censure. You are not playing fairly with yourself, either."

"Thank you for your kind consideration of me," retorted Mignon in shrill, furious tones. "I know just how sincere it is."

"It is sincere." Marjorie's low, harmonious accents contrasted sharply with Mignon's high-piched tones. "It has been hard for me to tell you these things. I have done so because I am trying to warn you before it is too late. Aside from Jerry and me there are only two other girls in the club who would stand by you if you got into trouble through your own mischief-making. The others would simply demand your resignation."

"You needn't count on me to stand by you, Mig-

non, if you keep up your back-biting about Veronica," flashed Jerry. She had reached the limit of silence. "I'd have asked you to resign before this if it hadn't been for Marjorie. You make me tired. Why can't you let well enough alone? You're an officer in the Lookouts. If you behave yourself you can shine in the revue. You'll gain more by keeping your opinions of Veronica to yourself."

Astonishment at this blunt advice tied Mignon's tongue for an instant. Secretly she had always been afraid of plain-spoken Jerry Macy. The stout girl had the disconcerting faculty of coming to the point with a vengeance. Her arguments were too clinching to be easily refuted. Marjorie's earnest speech had had small effect upon Mignon. Jerry had outlined her shaky position in a few brusque words, the truth of which struck home.

Having met her match, Mignon resorted to the world-old feminine artifice. Flinging herself down on a brocade settee she burst into tears. They were not tears of remorse; merely an outward expression of baffled rage. Justly accused, she was overcome by the knowledge of her own inability to clear herself.

Jerry eyed her with patent disgust. "Crocodile tears," was her uncharitable thought. Marjorie, on the contrary, was moved to pity. Rising, she crossed the room to where Mignon sat huddled on the settee, her face hidden in her hands. Laying a gentle

hand on the bowed shoulders, Marjorie said soothingly: "Don't cry, Mignon. Please try to think of Jerry and me as your friends. We have your interests at heart as well as Veronica's. I am sure that if you will try to know her, you will find her a delightful girl. No one knows that Jerry and I intended to speak to you about her. No one will ever know. All I am asking you to do is to give both yourself and Veronica a fair chance."

Mignon answered only with a fresh burst of sobs. This time they were not genuine. Under pretence of weeping, her active mind was already at work, endeavoring to decide what she had best do. To resign from the club would profit her nothing. Once out of it, she would not only miss all the good times in prospect, but also find herself completely out of touch with the members. Far from accepting Marjorie's rebuke in the spirit in which it had been offered, she now yearned for revenge upon this priggish, goody-goody who had dared to remind her of her shortcomings. Yet how could she retaliate if she deliberately cut herself off from her intended victim? Taking a leaf from Rowena's book she resolved to bring craft to her aid. She would pretend to fall in with Marjorie's scheme of conduct. Afterward——

Raising her head with a jerk she said with well-simulated meekness: "I believe you are right, Marjorie. Please give me another chance to show you

that I can be a true Lookout." With an air of deep penitence she held out her hand to Marjorie.

"I am glad you can say that, Mignon." Marjorie's hand went out instantly. "Now let us forget all about the disagreeable part. It has been hard for all of us. There is just one thing more I'd like to say. If after you have tried to like Veronica you find that you can't, then no one will be to blame. We cannot expect others always to see our friends as we see them. You have a perfect right to like or dislike anyone you please. All I ask is——"

"I *will* try to like her for your sake, Marjorie," Mignon interrupted with deceitful sweetness. Immediately changing the subject, she began to regale Marjorie with an account of a near accident she had had that day while driving her runabout.

"I think we'd better go," Jerry announced sharply. She had had quite enough of Mignon and was not impressed by the erring one's miraculous repentance. She doubted its sincerity, and she could hardly refrain from saying so. She had sat silent and uncompromising during the scene, making no move toward offering a rehabilitating hand. Mignon's swift change of the subject disgusted her even more. She understood the reason for it if Marjorie did not.

Mignon sent a covert glance toward this stony-faced third party whom she feared. She knew that

Jerry was quite out of sympathy with her. She longed to say something particularly cutting to the stout girl but caution warned her to silence.

"Yes, we must go." Marjorie still stood beside the settee that held Mignon. Now she turned to the latter who had made no move to rise and again held out her hand. "Good night, Mignon," she said. "Don't forget the club meeting to-morrow evening."

Reluctantly Mignon rose to perform the parting civilities which courtesy demanded.

"Good night, Mignon." Jerry was already half way to the door when she spoke.

"Good night." Mignon cast a spiteful look toward the stout girl. Following her callers into the hall, she saw them to the door with little enthusiasm. She was longing for them to go and could scarcely forbear slamming the unoffending portal in their faces. Closing it behind them with spiteful force, she clenched her hands in an excess of passionate fury. "Idiots!" she raged. "How dared they come here and humiliate me? They'll be sorry! Just wait!"

Half way down the walk the reform committee heard the slam of the door.

"Hear that?" asked Jerry savagely. "That's the real Mignon. Look out for her. You made a mistake when you said what you did about her being

free to like or dislike Ronny. You gave her a chance to hit back."

"But I said afterward that all I asked of her was——" Marjorie stopped. "Why, Jerry, I *didn't* say the most important part of my sentence. Mignon interrupted me. Then she began talking about her runabout and I didn't finish it. I thought she changed the subject because she was dreadfully embarrassed."

"Of course, she interrupted you." Jerry grew increasingly scornful. "She knew you'd said just enough to be useful to her. She hasn't any intention of trying to like Ronny. She'll treat her just the same as ever. If you say anything about it to her again, she will laugh and quote your own words to you. We might better have stayed at home for all the good we've done."

"Don't borrow trouble, Jeremiah." Marjorie linked an affectionate arm in Jerry's. "I think we've done a little good to-night. Mignon will be careful what she says or does for a while. She doesn't care to resign from the club, else she would have said so to-night. She wants to be in the revue, too. Telling her what Laurie said sounded rather like threatening her, but I had to do it."

"There is no cure for Mignon," stated Jerry shortly, "and this is the last time I'll help play doctor. There's just one consolation, though. Give her enough rope and she'll hang herself."

CHAPTER XV

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PLAN

THE Lookouts met the next evening at Muriel Harding's home, and the Campfire project was received with acclamation. Nearly everyone present had a suggestion to tender that would go toward making the affair a success. The decision regarding the number of booths and what each should offer for sale had been left to the Lookouts. After much discussion they agreed upon a number of attractions which were calculated to meet the approval of the residents of Sanford. Not wishing to solicit donations from those on whose attendance they counted, it was difficult to plan features that would yield the largest profit for the smallest outlay of money. Unsolicited donations would be thankfully received. As a matter of fact the mothers and fathers of the members had already offered their help.

One booth would be devoted to the sale of home-made candy, which the mothers of the Lookouts had agreed to contribute. Another would offer hand-painted postcards, pledged by the artistic element of the club. There was also to be a gypsy fortune-teller, a fish pond, a lemonade stand, an ice cream and cake booth, fruit and flower booth, a huge pumpkin on which guesses were to be sold regard-

ing the exact number of seeds it contained, and various other artful attractions which would cost little and yield much profit. It was also deemed advisable to ask the members of the senior class to help at the various booths.

The Sanford Guards had held a meeting on the preceding evening and Hal had informed Jerry of their willingness to take half of the work of preparation on their shoulders. Besides Laurie's revue, they would offer a funny side show, a shooting gallery, a patriotic booth, as well as furnishing nightly an exhibition of military manoeuvers. Jerry duly reported this to the Lookouts, who were well-satisfied. Thanksgiving fell on the twenty-seventh of November. As it was the evening of the fourth on which the meeting was held, the need for swift action became imminent.

"We'll have to hustle if we are going to do all we've planned to do in the next three weeks," was Jerry's unofficial reminder. "We have to go to school, you know, and we can't neglect the day nursery. We'll have to buy some of the postcards. You girls can never turn out enough in three weeks to supply the demand. The candy and cakes our mothers will take care of, thank goodness. Still, we ought to buy a certain amount of boxed candy. The boys will see to the tents and the counters and such things. Hal says that the military tents the Guards use aren't large enough. Most of the boys

have larger ones of their own that they use to go camping. They will be best for booths. It's a good thing the Armory is such a whale—I mean, such a large place."

"We can't afford to waste a minute," nodded Muriel Harding. "It's a good thing, too, that we are out of basket ball this year. I am glad of it. Last year killed my ambition to play."

"Miss Davis is having her own troubles in making up the teams," informed Daisy Griggs. "The sophs who played on Rowena Farnham's team last year all refused to try for the junior team. Nellie Simmons told a girl that she wouldn't play basket ball again for a hundred dollars. I guess the scolding Miss Archer gave them last year was a little too much for them."

"I am very sorry there is no senior team," declared Mignon with a defiant toss of her head. "Basket ball is about the only thing worth while in Sanford High. I think it is very sweet in Miss Davis to try so hard to keep it alive after what she had to endure last year."

"Whatever she had to stand from the players was her own fault," flashed Susan Atwell heatedly. "If she hadn't—— Oh, I forgot—— I'm a Lookout." Susan subsided with a blush and a giggle.

Mignon's black eyes gleamed. Others beside herself, it seemed, could gossip. Daisy Griggs and Susan Atwell were both guilty of back-biting. Real-

izing her advantage she promptly seized it. "It is because I *am* a Lookout that I am defending Miss Davis. It is hardly fair, I think, to gossip about her behind her back."

"I'd just as soon say it to her face," sputtered Susan.

"Suppose we drop the subject of basket ball," suggested Jerry significantly. "We have other things more important to discuss."

Mignon opened her lips as though about to make hot reply. Reconsidering, she contented herself with an inimitable shrug that spoke volumes. For once she had scored. She would treasure the knowledge against a time of need. Supremely satisfied with herself, she entered into the further discussion of the Campfire with deceitful amiability. Only one person utterly refuted it. Jerry Macy was not to be deceived for a moment. Unknown to Marjorie, she had determined to constitute herself a vigilance committee of one to keep tab on Mignon. She was entirely through with Mignon and she vengefully hoped that the figurative hanging she had prophesied would soon take place.

The next three weeks found the Lookouts engaged in a whirl of day nursery, Campfire and school. Naturally the Campfire movement predominated their interest. Had they undertaken it alone, they could never have carried it to completion in so short a period of time. The Guards, headed by

Laurie, Hal and Danny Seabrooke, proved able coadjutors, and the project took definite shape with a rush.

The Campfire was scheduled to open on Thanksgiving evening, and the excited promoters of it hurried through with their Thanksgiving dinners in order to spend the afternoon in putting the final touches to its various attractions. In a small city like Sanford, advertising the affair had been a simple matter. For two weeks beforehand it had been the main topic of conversation in the two high schools. Gay posters announcing it were prominently placed in several of the largest stores. Typed notices ornamented the locker rooms in both high schools, the pupils of which straightway constituted themselves as ardent newscarriers. This in itself was an infallible method of advertising.

As for the big Armory, it hardly knew itself. A festive collection of tents opened in front to their widest extent, lined three sides of it. At the upper end, at the right of the platform, a palm-screened enclosure had been arranged to hold the Sanford orchestra. Despite the amount of room the booths took up, the space enclosed by them was large. During the early part of the evening it would be used for the military manoeuvers. These over it would be turned into a dancing floor. An admission fee of thirty-five cents would be levied at the door, and the spectators would view the entertainment pro-

vided from the gallery which extended around three sides of the drill floor.

The Lookouts, in their prettiest evening frocks, assisted by their senior sisters, were to preside over the booths the club had fitted out as their part of the undertaking. The Guards were to look after their own special contributions and act as ushers and program distributors. Colonel Dearborn, a United States Army veteran, the only Sanford survivor of the Civil War, would open the Campfire with a speech of welcome. Captain Baynes, the drill master of the Sanford Guards, was also down for a speech. The latter had received injuries in the Spanish-American war which incapacitated him for further active service in the army. His enthusiasm unquenched, he had organized the Sanford Guards and devoted himself assiduously to their training. He was greatly liked and respected by the Weston High School lads, who had vigorously pleaded for a few words from him to complete the opening ceremonies. Miss Archer had been unanimously chosen by the Lookouts as their representative speaker.

Owing to lack of time, Laurie's revue would begin at eight o'clock, and last an hour. Constance and Mignon were down on the program for songs. Veronica was to dance, Danny Seabrooke was to demonstrate his agility in a comic juggling act. Laurie and Hal were to display themselves as scien-

tific handlers of fencing foils, while the Crane was to do a funny eccentric dance which he could perform to perfection. Muriel, Susan, Rita Talbot and three Weston High School boys were to contribute a pretty singing and dancing number. Greatly to his discomfiture, Laurie had received numerous requests to play on his violin, and had reluctantly consented to render a solo as the concluding number of the revue. The Weston High Glee Club were to open the performance. The revue was to be followed by ten minutes of military manoeuvers, a different drill to be given each night. Then the spectators were to be cordially invited to descend and spend their money.

"I can almost believe I'm a real soldier," Marjorie confided to Constance, when at half past seven o'clock Thanksgiving evening the two girls stepped into the patriotically decorated Armory which presented a gay and busy aspect. Wherever her eyes chanced to rest she saw the khaki-clad figures of the Guards, their uniforms patterned after those of the regular United States Army.

"It's inspiring, isn't it?" Constance, looking very lovely in her pale blue and silver frock, gazed eagerly about her. Standing beside Marjorie, who was wearing her peachblow gown, the two young girls made a pretty picture, as more than one gallant guardsman was ready to testify.

"I do hope everything will go beautifully." Mar-

jorie clasped her hands fervently. "I have made up my mind that our booth must sell every single box of candy. Irma is sweet among the flowers, isn't she? The flower booth just suits her. All the girls look lovely. Lucy Warner is a dear in that soft, white gown. She's a good person to have in the postcards."

"Now what are you two talking about?" Unobserved, Jerry Macy had stolen up behind them.

"Oh, hello, Jeremiah! How nice you look!" Marjorie reached out to pat Jerry's plump shoulder. "That white net gown is so becoming."

"It'll do," conceded Jerry gruffly. According to her own statement, praise always made her "feel foolish." "You and Connie are pretty likely to drag down a few bouquets," she generously added.

"We'll do." Constance mischievously mimicked Jerry.

"Now that we've changed compliments, I'll throw a few bouquets at the shrine of the Lookouts," grinned Jerry. "We certainly deserve a lot of credit, and we owe a loud vote of thanks to our fathers and mothers. If it hadn't been for them we wouldn't have half the stuff for the booths that's in them now. When this thing is over, the Lookouts must send personal letters of thanks to all who've helped us."

"We surely must," chorused Marjorie and Constance.

The Lookouts were indeed indebted to their elders. Mr. Macy, Mr. La Salle and Miss Allison had been especially liberal with monetary gifts, while the fathers of the members in less affluent circumstances had each "done their bit." The mothers, too, had become loyal candy and cake makers, not to mention the many other services they had rendered ungrudgingly. Anxious to encourage their children to the performance of worthy work, these broad-minded men and women believed it to be their duty to assist the young enthusiasts in every possible way.

"I'm glad we gave Mignon that lemonade job," commented Jerry, her round eyes wandering to where the big punch bowl stood, thus far minus the French girl's presence. "She'll be off by herself where she can't stir up trouble. She'll have to stay there, too, when the revue's over. I calculated on that when I asked her to take charge of the lemonade bowl. She doesn't know that she's going to be off in a corner away from the rest of the girls. I didn't tell her. Maybe she'll be mad when she finds out. I can't help it. I hope she will get here on time. It's just like her to come straggling in late so everyone will see her."

"Jerry, you are breaking the Golden Rule," reminded Marjorie.

"Oh, I'm only bending it," retorted Jerry good-humoredly. "Besides, you two girls don't count.

I must say whatever I think to you. To others I am a clammy clam. Hello! There she comes now. I must say she looks like a lemon in that yellow frock. It's the exact color of one."

"She is really stunning!" Marjorie exclaimed generously. "That pale yellow chiffon frock is quite suited to her. It brings out her black eyes and hair."

"Handsome is as handsome does," Jerry made skeptical response. "I must leave you now to break the sad news to her. If, in about three minutes, you see her looking like a thundercloud you'll know the reason."

Jerry sauntered away to deliver the fateful information to Mignon. The eyes of the two friends meeting, Marjorie made a gesture of dissent. "I'd rather not watch to see how she takes it. It doesn't seem quite fair. Jerry didn't stop to think or she wouldn't have said that. As I'm not in the revue I had better go to my booth."

"I must hurry behind the scenes," said Constance. "It's ten minutes to eight now and my song comes third on the program."

With this the two girls separated, Constance heading in the direction of a room at the left of the Armory, nearest to the platform. From it the girl performers made their entrance to the improvised stage. The room on the right had been given over to the boys. Marjorie walked slowly toward

the candy booth. When half way to it she heard someone call her name. Glancing in the direction of the post card booth, she saw Lucy Warner beckoning eagerly to her. A happy light radiated from the girl's usually austere features. Her bluish-green eyes sparkled with pleasure. Lucy was childishly delighted to have the opportunity to assist in so important an affair as the Campfire. She felt that she owed this happiness directly to Marjorie.

"Oh, Marjorie!" she exclaimed, as her friend reached the booth. "It's wonderful! I can't really believe that this good time has come to me! And I have you to thank for it all! I hope some day to be able to show you how much I appreciate your friendship."

"I'm ever so glad to see you so bright and happy, Lucy," Marjorie made earnest response. "You must thank yourself for your good time, though. You are a faithful Lookout. This is only the beginning. There are lots of good times ahead of you."

Before Lucy could reply, Hal Macy appeared at Marjorie's elbow with, "Veronica's here. She's in the girls' dressing room. She wants to see you."

"I'll come back later, Lucy." With a friendly nod, Marjorie turned to accompany Hal across the polished floor. A happy smile played about her lips. Whatever the Lookouts might eventually set down to their further credit, they had certainly succeeded in bringing happiness to Lucy Warner.

CHAPTER XVI

A PUZZLING YOUNG PERSON

"VERONICA BROWNING!" Marjorie cried out admiringly. "You magnificent person. Where, oh where, did you get that wonderful, I won't say gown, I'll say robe? Certainly you never walked through the streets of Sanford in *that.*"

"Oh, no, I ordered a——" Veronica checked herself, looking vexed. "Miss Archer insisted that I should come in a taxicab," she explained shortly.

"It's a marvelous robe." Noting Veronica's abrupt chopping off of her first sentence, and the frown that accompanied it, Marjorie hastily returned to the exquisite garment Veronica was wearing. It was of soft, dead black crêpe de chine, and fell away from her dazzlingly white throat and shoulders in long, graceful lines. Very full, it swept the floor ending in a border of stars and crescent moons, outlined in dull silver. The ample sleeves, edged in the same silver design, dropped away from her round white arms, giving a wing-like effect. Over her golden brown hair was banded a fillet of silver. A quaintly-wrought pendant in the form of a crescent depended from it and lay directly on the center of her forehead.

"You look like—let me see—a painting of 'Night'

that I once saw!" cried Marjorie, triumphantly recalling it in time to make the comparison. "But what are you going to do with those black and orange wings?" Marjorie was intently eyeing a small pair of black and orange wings that dangled from Veronica's arm.

"I am the Night, the silvery, shadowy Night," declaimed Veronica gaily, one white arm raised aloft. "I am going to give you a dance called 'Night.' Hence this somber robe. No, the wings don't belong to Night. Underneath this black pall, I am a glorious black and orange butterfly. I am to do two dances; 'Butterfly' will follow 'Night.' I can rid myself of this black thing in about one minute or even less. As I come next to you on the program, Connie, I will ask you to wait after your song and fasten on my wings. Here they are."

"Where did you learn to dance, Veronica?" queried Marjorie thoughtlessly. Instantly she regretted having asked the question. Hastily she added.: "That was rather a personal question. Perhaps I shouldn't——"

"Oh, I don't object to telling *you,* Marjorie." A faintly amused smile dawned upon Veronica's lips. "I have known how to dance ever since I was a child. Most of my dances like 'Night' and 'Butterfly' I made up. The Shadow dance I learned from seeing it done by another person. I used to——" Again the provoking break in her speech occurred.

Marjorie's face fell. Why did Veronica always pause in the middle of what promised to be an interesting revelation? What an extremely peculiar girl she was. She could not refrain from wondering, too, at the beautiful robe that this charming but tantalizing young person wore. It must have cost a considerable sum of money. Yet Veronica appeared to regard it with the carelessness of one who was accustomed to the best of everything. Perhaps she had at one time been possessed of wealth and had met with sudden reverses. Still, it was hardly likely that, given such a contingency, she would now be so humbly earning her living and education. Marjorie's swift cogitations ended in a sigh of defeat at her inability to reconcile lowly Veronica with her handsome dancing dress.

Veronica's voice, quivering with suppressed laughter, broke in upon her perplexed meditations. "Now you are wondering all sorts of things about me," she guessed, flashing a tender glance at Marjorie. "Never mind. Some day I may be able to set all your doubts at rest."

"It isn't a question of doubts, Ronny." Marjorie returned the other girl's glance with one of equal affection. "I haven't a single doubt about you. It's only that sometimes you puzzle me."

"I know I do. There are certain things——"

The arrival of Constance cut short what bade fair to have been a confidence on Veronica's part. Di-

rectly behind Constance came Mignon La Salle. Her black eyes widened as she caught sight of Veronica. As Constance warmly greeted the latter the French girl continued to stare at the black-garbed figure as though unable to believe her own eyesight.

"Good evening," she said stiffly, inclining her haughty head very formally to Veronica. "Sorry to intrude. I thought I might find Geraldine here."

"Didn't you see her when you came in?" asked Marjorie in surprise.

"Oh, yes. I saw her then, but I wish to tell her something." Mignon tossed her head. Unable to keep her grievance to herself she continued angrily: "I must have the lemonade bowl moved to one of the booths. I don't like the present location of it. When Geraldine," she loftily refused to shorten it to Jerry, "mentioned it to me, I didn't pay any particular attention to what she was saying. I wish I had. At any rate, it will have to be moved."

Blank silence succeeded this declaration. Veronica was not in touch with the situation and therefore had nothing to say. Constance and Marjorie knew only too well that stolid Jerry would not yield to Mignon's whim. This knowledge robbed them both of ready speech.

The sonorous voice of Colonel Dearborn raised in an address of welcome was borne to their ears as a timely bridge over the embarrassing situation.

"The Campfire has begun," snapped Mignon. "I

'nust find Geraldine." She flaunted from the room, a disgruntled flash of yellow.

"I must go, too." Marjorie walked to the open door. "I'll see you both later. Are you going to stay for the dance, Ronny?"

"No." Veronica shook her head. "Like Cinderella, I must flit away from the ball as soon as I have danced." She breathed a faint sigh of regret, then smiled mockingly. "Such social pleasures are not for a poor servant girl."

Marjorie left the dressing room with these words still in her ears. Taking up her position in the booth she forced herself to forget puzzling Veronica for the moment and gave herself over to listening to the speeches. She had missed the most of the old Colonel's brief, soldier-like address, so she paid strict heed to those of Captain Baynes and Miss Archer.

When they had retired, to the sound of hearty applause from the overflowing gallery, the Weston High Glee Club lifted up their tuneful voices in the first number of the revue. Danny Seabrooke followed them with a clever juggling act. Marjorie's heart beat high with love and pride as Connie stepped serenely onto the stage, with the quiet composure that so individualized her, and awaited the prelude to her song played by Professor Harmon. To Marjorie it seemed as though she had never heard Connie sing more sweetly. The song she had

chosen was particularly beautiful and her clear, pure notes held a world of pathos that went straight to the heart. Abiding by Laurie's mandate she refused to respond to an encore, though the audience clamored persistently for it.

Unknown to Marjorie, a curious bit of drama had preceded the dance by Veronica, to which she was impatiently looking forward. Lawrence Armitage had met Veronica when she entered the Armory, enveloped in a long black cloak, and courteously conducted her to the girls' dressing room. It being his duty to call each act, he was kept busy between the two dressing rooms. As Constance was finishing her song, he hurried to the left-hand dressing room and rapped on the half-open door. From within he heard the sound of cheerful voices and light laughter. Muriel, Susan and Rita, the feminine half of the sextette which was to follow Veronica's dance, had gathered there and were chatting gaily with the pretty dancer.

"Come," called Muriel Harding.

Entering, Laurie's eyes became suddenly riveted on Veronica. A perplexed frown sprang to his brow. He was again obsessed with the conviction that he had previously seen her in this very costume. His puzzlement deepened as he stepped to the door and held it open for her. Catching up a fold of her voluminous robe, she smiled and made him a saucy little curtsey of thanks. Only a few feet intervened

between the door and the three steps leading up to the platform. A row of tall potted palms had been set on each side of it, so as to partially conceal the entrance and exit of each performer. The quaint curtsey of the black-garbed girl caused truant recollection to sweep over Laurie in a flood. "Now I know where I first saw you!" he exclaimed in a low, triumphant tone. Like a flash Veronica laid a warning finger to her lips. "Keep it a secret," she breathed as she flitted by him. The next instant she had scurried up the three steps and onto the platform, leaving behind her a most amazed young man.

A subdued breath of wondering admiration stirred the audience upstairs and down as this lovely apparition of Night glided to the center of the stage. For a brief instant she tarried there, raising her white arms and lowering them with a slow, sweeping gesture that gave the effect of darkness suddenly dropping down upon the earth. Then the orchestra sounded a soft sighing prelude and the black and silver figure circled the stage like a floating, elusive shadow. Few persons in that assemblage had ever before witnessed an interpretative dance such as Veronica performed. It was as though she had become embued with the very spirit of Night and sought to impress it upon her audience. Every movement and gesture was replete with meaning. She brought to the imagination that stir of supreme

mystery with which one often watches the darkness gather and the first stars of the evening begin to twinkle in the firmament. At the end of it she exited with a quick, gliding run, arms horizontally outstretched, hands holding up the loose folds of her robe, a veritable winged Night itself rushing swiftly on toward dawn.

Before the first wild echo of applause had spent itself, she was back on the stage, miraculously metamorphosed into a gorgeous black and orange butterfly. She proceeded to give the Sanfordites a spectacle in toe dancing worthy a premiere. Even as she had put the soul of the Night itself into her previous dance, now she truly resembled a huge butterfly, sailing joyously about in the sunshine. The perfection of her interpretation took the audience by storm. When she disappeared, or rather fluttered from the stage, a tumult of approbation set in. Laurie was obliged to mount the platform and explain that Miss Browning would not respond to an encore, before quiet was again restored and the sextette made its appearance.

Although the remaining numbers of the revue each received a generous mead of approval, the honors of the performance were decidedly Veronica's. Even Constance, for once, held second place. The grace and originality of the former's interpretations had aroused enthusiasm on all sides.

There was one person, however, who had not been

pleasantly impressed by Veronica's dancing. Mignon La Salle was enraged beyond measure at the triumph of "that servant girl." Her own solo, as usual a difficult French song which few present had understood and could therefore only mildly appreciate, had been received with a far lesser degree of enthusiasm than she had confidently expected. She blamed Marjorie Dean, who had helped Laurie arrange the program, for placing her song so near to the end of the revue. She was also furious with Jerry Macy. The stout girl had calmly refused to place the lemonade bowl in one of the booths, explaining that, as it in itself was a feature, its present position would not be bettered by moving it to a booth.

Completely out of sorts with the world in general, Mignon cherished a lawless desire to swoop down upon the big cut glass lemonade bowl, overturn it, send it crashing to the floor and fling the cups that surrounded it, after it. Her second thought was to go to Jerry, refuse to become a purveyor of lemonade and shake the dust of the Armory from her disdainful feet. Crafty reflection whispered to her that this course would be folly. Jerry would take her at her word and show little sorrow at being thus deprived of her services. It behooved her to hit upon some new method of retaliation which would doubly repay these hateful girls for the fancied wrongs she had suffered at their hands.

She vowed that before the third and last evening of the bazaar had ended she would find a way to do it.

CHAPTER XVII

CHOOSING A VICTIM

THE military manoeuvers by the Sanford Guards over, the well-pleased spectators made an orderly rush for the big drill floor, there to take more active part in the Campfire. Opening as it did on a national holiday, everyone was in high good humor and willing to spend money. The space reserved for the dancing had been roped in, leaving a good-sized aisle all the way around the Armory between the ropes and the booths. There was no room on the lower floor for chairs, but the gallery offered a vantage point to those who preferred to become onlookers of the dancing rather than take part in it.

That it had been a highly profitable evening became evident to the Lookouts, when just before midnight they happily viewed their depleted booths and fell to counting their gains. Everything had progressed with unrivalled smoothness. Even Mignon's black eyes glistened as she counted the wealth of nickels and small silver which had accrued from

the despised lemonade bowl. She had taken in almost thirty dollars and plumed herself accordingly. Jerry had been right in her calculation as to the best place for the lemonade. Far from admitting it, Mignon merely felt increasing bitterness toward Jerry.

Busy Jerry was quite unaware of Mignon's dark sentiments toward herself. Had she known of them, they would have caused her small anxiety. She was too blissfully elated over the success of the Campfire to do anything but rejoice loudly as she moved from booth to booth, a good-sized cash box in hand, to collect the evening's profits.

"It's a howling success," she caroled joyously, as she entered the candy booth. Seated on a high stool Marjorie was too much absorbed in the counting of little piles of money, from notes to pennies, to do more than nod emphatically to this triumphant salutation.

"I believe almost everyone who was here to-night bought a box of candy," she said solemnly as she finished with a heap of nickels and marked down the amount they made on a slip of paper. "We've taken in——" She hurriedly calculated the joint receipts. "Would you believe it? I have one hundred and two dollars here. If we keep on like this we won't have enough candy to last us over to-morrow night."

"It's pretty much the same in all the booths.

You folks are quite a little ahead of the others, though. You're the original candy kid, Marjorie. That's not slang. It's a compliment."

"It sounds like both," laughed Marjorie. "Wasn't the revue fine, Jerry? Did you ever before see anyone dance like Ronny. She's a marvel. Not that I liked her dancing a bit better than Connie's singing," she added loyally, "but it was so entirely different from anything we've ever had at a show. She told me to-night that she made up both those dances herself."

"She gets curiouser and curiouser," commented Jerry. "One who didn't know could never be made to believe that such a gorgeous person was working her way through high school. What puzzles me most is where—— I guess I won't say it. I'm a Lookout."

"I know what you mean. I thought of it, too. It's her own affair. We mustn't discuss it, or her, either." Marjorie was equally bent on loyalty.

"There's something I've just got to say, though," declared Jerry. "Mignon behaved a lot better about the lemonade bowl than I thought. She asked me to change the location of it. Of course I said 'no.' She looked pretty stormy for a minute, then she said, 'Have it your own way,' and walked off, shrugging her shoulders. I expected she'd make a fuss, and for once she gave me a pleasant surprise. I hope she behaves like a reasonable human

being during the other two nights of the Campfire."

It was on Marjorie's tongue to relate to Jerry what Mignon had said in the dressing room. Considering it in the light of gossip she refrained from repeating it. She hastened to agree with Jerry that she also hoped for the best regarding Mignon and let the subject drop.

Friday saw the Lookouts and the Guards early at the Armory, hard at work preparing for the rush they trusted that evening would bring. There was much to be done and they spent the day in indefatigable toil, going home only long enough to snatch a hasty luncheon before returning to their tasks. The program of the revue was to remain the same save for a change of songs on the part of the vocalists. There were to be no addresses, however, as on the opening night.

Their painstaking preparations were again rewarded by a crowd of pleasure seekers almost as large as that of the previous evening. Again everything slid gaily along as though on invisible wheels. Midnight again ushered in the counting of large gains. Saturday proved an equally busy day. The youthful promoters of the Campfire were troubled only by the alarming possibility that their wares were sure to give out long before the evening was over. They decided wisely to sell out every last article of which the merchant booths boasted and

let the dancing and amusement booths do the rest.

Despite the work of the Campfire, the day nursery received its afternoon quota of two Lookouts. It was an obligation which had to be met, Campfire or no Campfire. Even Mignon La Salle, when asked if she would do duty Saturday afternoon, acquiesced without a murmur, taking care to inquire of Irma Linton, however, before committing herself, as to who would be her partner in the enterprise. Her thoughts centered on the Campfire, Irma had consulted her book and replied absently, "Lucy Warner." Nor did she note the peculiar gleam in the French girl's eyes as she answered suavely, "Very well, you may count on me to go with her."

The opportunity to hold a heart-to-heart talk with Lucy was something for which Mignon had been vainly watching ever since the Hallowe'en party. Due to Marjorie Dean's discreet counsel, Lucy had not given the French girl the slightest conversational opening. She had surrounded herself with a wall of icy reserve which Mignon had found impregnable. She was, therefore, secretly jubilant over the unexpected manner in which Fortune had favored her. It was late Friday evening when Irma had informed her of it and Lucy had already gone home. Irma had explained to Mignon that it was really Jerry's turn to go to the nursery, but

owing to her many duties at the Campfire she had asked for a substitute.

This accorded even better with Mignon's plans. There was every possibility that Lucy would know nothing of the substitution until it would be too late to protest against it. Jerry, herself, was yet to be reckoned with, however. Irma would undoubtedly inform Jerry that she, Mignon, was to take her place. If Jerry took the trouble to inquire who was to accompany Mignon she would promptly veto Lucy's going. Yet there was a fighting chance that busy Jerry might forget to ask this question. Mignon hoped that she would. She also decided that she would not put in an appearance at the Armory on Saturday before going to the nursery. She would telephone Irma in the morning that she could not go there before night, but would be on hand at the nursery for her detail.

There are times when Fortune apparently leans kindly toward the unworthy. In the long run, however, she generally deserts these wrong-doers, leaving them to flounder miserably in the meshes of the nets they have heartlessly set for others. For the time being, at least, she had chosen to favor Mignon. Owing to a number of important letters Lucy Warner had promised to write for Miss Archer, she had also arranged to be away from the Armory until Saturday evening. She had planned to go

directly from the office to the day nursery, where she confidently expected Jerry to meet her.

As for Jerry, she had thankfully received Irma's promise to supply a substitute and inquired no further into the matter. Had Marjorie or Constance known of the arrangement Irma had innocently made, it would have been changed. Caught up in the whirl of the Campfire, neither of them remembered to question Irma regarding who was to do duty at the nursery on Saturday. Thus for Mignon the field was miraculously cleared of impediments.

When, at four o'clock, Lucy entered the playroom of the nursery, her amazement can be better imagined than described. Instead of seeing good-natured Jerry Macy, her displeased eyes rested on Mignon La Salle. Bored indifference written on her sharp features, the French girl lounged in a chair in a corner of the playroom, apparently with no intent toward making herself useful. Strangely enough she was now the only person in the room.

"Hello, Lucy," she drawled. "You don't seem pleased to see me."

"I'm not," snapped Lucy. "Where is Jerry Macy? *She* is to be on duty with me this afternoon."

Mignon merely shrugged her shoulders by way of an answer.

"Where is she?" repeated Lucy, her brows knitting in their ready scowl.

"She won't be here. Irma asked me to take her place. Any objections?"

"I am willing to abide by Irma's decision." It cost Lucy severe effort to make this reply. "As you are to take Jerry's place, suppose we start at once to amuse the children. By the way, where *are* they?"

"Out in the back yard. I sent them there and told that stupid maid to look after them. They made too much noise. I couldn't stand it."

"It's too cold for them to be out." With a swift, reproachful glance toward indolent Mignon, Lucy hurried to the back yard to attend to her charges. Five minutes later she had hustled them into the playroom, a shivering little band, and started a romping, childish game, calculated to undo any bad effects which might otherwise result from Mignon's neglect.

Realizing that she could expect no help from the French girl, Lucy ignored her and entered energetically into her work. A lover of children, it was a pleasure to make them happy. One baby game followed another until the twilight shadows began to thicken. Finally marshalling them to their chairs at the table, she took her place among them and told them fairy tales in a simple, lively fashion that quite enthralled them.

Through it all, Mignon made no move to assist her. She simply sat still, a smile of mocking amusement on her thin lips. Lucy Warner had found her own level, was her uncharitable thought. As a mere nobody, she was quite at home with these grubby, slum waifs. Undoubtedly Lucy was furious with her for not helping entertain these beggars. Nevertheless, she was quite sure that angry or not Lucy would listen to what she intended, presently, to say. Six o'clock would mark the end of the detestable session. Then—Mignon's smile grew more malevolent as she noted that the wall clock pointed to five minutes before six.

As it rang out the hour, the matron entered the kitchen. "You'd better go now, Miss Lucy," she said kindly. "I know you have to be at the Armory by half past seven. The mothers of these babies will soon be coming for them. I'll look after them till then."

"Thank you, Mrs. Taggart." Lucy rose amid a chorus of hearty protest from her charges. "Doodbye," and "Tum aden soon, nice lady," greeted her from all sides.

"I will," she promised, nodding gaily toward her small worshippers. Without glancing at Mignon she turned to the oak settle on which she had laid her wraps and began to put them on. She was, indeed, deeply incensed against Mignon. Should she or should she not inform Jerry Macy of Mignon's lack

of co-operation? She hardly knew what to do about it. On one point she was quite determined. She would not walk home with the French girl. She would bid her a cool "good night" and hurry from the house.

Mignon was of a different opinion. Seeing Lucy engaged in donning her wraps, she lazily rose. Pettishly brushing aside a youngster who had toddled up to her and clutched a fold of her gown, she hastily slipped on her fur coat—she had not removed her hat—and hurried after Lucy. The latter had already delivered her curt farewell and was out on the veranda before Mignon overtook her.

"Wait a minute," commanded Mignon. "I have something to tell you that you *must* listen to. You'll understand that I mean well, the moment you hear it. It's a shame for you to be so deceived by Marjorie Dean. She——"

"I won't listen to you." Lucy's smouldering anger flashed into instant flame. "You can't make me believe anything hateful of Marjorie. You are only trying to make trouble." Discretion overcome by wrath she continued heatedly, "Marjorie herself warned me not to take your gossip seriously. She knew that——"

"I'd tell you certain things she has said about you to me," sneered Mignon.

"Certain things? What do you mean?" Lucy's too-suspicious nature now sprang to the fore. This

was the second time that Mignon had insinuated that Marjorie had gossiped about her.

"After all, what's the use of telling you?" Mignon craftily changed her tactics with a view toward whetting Lucy's morbid curiosity. "You'll go straight to Marjorie Dean with them. She will deny them, of course. Then you will be down on me more than ever."

"If you can tell me anything that will actually prove to me that Marjorie Dean is not my friend, I promise you faithfully never to go to her with it." Lucy spoke with hurt intensity. "If she has been deceitful with me, as you insist that she has, I will never willingly speak to her again. But I am sure she is honorable and loyal. I can't believe otherwise," she ended with a quick, sobbing breath.

"*That* for her loyalty!" Mignon snapped her fingers. "What about the Observer?"

Lucy shrank from Mignon as though the latter had dealt her a physical blow. In the November twilight the paleness of her set face stood out sharply. "Stop!" she gasped. Catching Mignon's arm in a tense hold, she planted herself squarely before her tormentor. "What—do—you—know—about the Observer?" she stammered, her green eyes gleaming like those of a cat.

Mignon laughed unpleasantly. "Not as much, perhaps, as *you* know, but enough. You were an idiot to ask Marjorie Dean's forgiveness. She loves

to make persons believe they are in the wrong, so that she can have the pleasure of forgiving them. She is really clever at that sort of thing. She made poor Mary Raymond's life miserable during that winter Mary lived at the Deans. Mary was a silly to make up with her. Why, the very day that Marjorie and I went to Miss Archer's to see about getting you the secretaryship, she mentioned the trouble you and she had last year. She was quite cautious about it then and didn't tell me much. Later I found out about the Observer, though."

Stunned by Mignon's revelations, Lucy silently fought back the burning tears that threatened to overflow her eyes. But one thought obscured her sorely troubled mind. Marjorie Dean had cruelly betrayed her to Mignon. She had pledged her word of honor never to reveal Lucy's misdeed to anyone, and she had broken her word. Utterly crushed, poor Lucy did not stop to consider that Mignon was the least likely of all persons to whom Marjorie would confide such a secret. She knew only that the mere mention of the word "Observer" was clear proof of her false friend's perfidy. Over-suspicious by nature, she was prone to believe all persons villains until they had given signal manifestation of their honesty. Nor had she been long enough associated with Marjorie and her friends to easily retreat from that unjust viewpoint.

"Don't feel downhearted about it," was Mig-

non's sneering consolation. "Now that your eyes have been opened to a few things, you can show Marjorie Dean that you aren't as dense as she seems to think you. I don't mind in the least about that Observer business. I dare say if you told me your side of it I should find that it wasn't anything very dreadful. As for Marjorie Dean's version, well——" Mignon made a significant pause.

"I have nothing whatever to say on that subject," was Lucy's stiff answer. She was vowing within herself that "Once bitten twice shy" should hereafter be her motto. "I will say this much, though. You have given me unmistakable proof that Marjorie Dean is not nor never was my friend. I will keep my promise to you."

Before Mignon had time to make reply, a rush of light feet on the pavement informed her that Lucy had left her. Through the dusk she could just distinguish a little figure fleeing madly up the quiet street. She laughed softly as it turned a corner and disappeared. She had already done much toward avenging the wrongs she had received at the hands of Marjorie Dean.

CHAPTER XVIII

NOT AT HOME?

"MARJORIE, have you seen Lucy Warner?" Jerry Macy stepped inside the candy booth, her plump face alive with concern. "It's half past eight and she's not here. The girls in her booth are wondering what has happened to her."

"Why, no, I haven't." Marjorie's features mirrored Jerry's anxious look. "I know she had some work to do for Miss Archer this afternoon. She told me so. She said, too, it was her turn at the nursery."

"That's so." Jerry looked thoughtful. "I was to go there, too, but I was so busy I asked Irma to appoint a substitute. I don't know who went in my place. I'd better see Irma and find out. Whichever Lookout took my turn may know what's keeping Lucy away." Bustling off in search of Irma, Jerry accosted her with: "Who subbed for me to-day at the nursery?"

"Mignon La Salle," returned Irma placidly.

"What!" ejaculated Jerry. As the revue was in progress she cautiously lowered her tone as she continued: "For goodness sake, Irma, why in the world did you send Mignon? No wonder Lucy hasn't put in an appearance!"

"What are you talking about, Jeremiah, and why should I not have sent Mignon? Lucy is too sensible a girl to allow Mignon's airs to annoy her, if that's what you are thinking of. Besides, Mignon was really nice about saying she'd go," defended Irma in a mildly injured tone.

"I don't doubt it," was Jerry's satirical retort. "Don't mind me, Irma. I'm not blaming you for it. It's just one of those beautiful 'vicissitudes' that are always bound to jump up and hit a person in the face. Just like that!" Jerry made a comic gesture of despair and beat a hasty course toward the candy booth.

"Well, I found out," she groaned. "It was our dear Mignon. You can guess the rest. Irma certainly did things up properly, that time. She didn't know what you and I know, or she wouldn't have done it."

"Mignon!" Marjorie's brown eyes held a startled light. "Jerry, do you suppose after all the warnings I've given Lucy that——"

"It looks suspicious," interrupted Jerry. "I should think, though, that a bright girl like Lucy Warner could easily see through Mignon. I guess I'll wait until the revue is over and then interview her ladyship. I may find out a few things."

"I wish you would." A worried note had crept into Marjorie's voice. "I hope Mignon hasn't hurt Lucy's feelings again. Poor Lucy! She has been

so happy these last three days. Perhaps nothing like that has happened. Maybe she was too tired to come here to-night. She has had a busy day."

"Let's hope that's the reason." Jerry's reply did not convey a marked degree of hopefulness. She was more than half convinced that Mignon was responsible for Lucy's non-appearance at the Campfire.

The military manoeuvers at last concluded, Jerry kept a lynx eye on the lemonade stand until she saw Mignon take up her position there. Marching boldly over to it, the stout girl addressed her with an abrupt: "Thank you for substituting for me at the nursery this afternoon. I understand Lucy Warner was with you. Did she say anything to you about not being able to come here to-night?" She stared hard at Mignon as she made this inquiry.

"Not a word." Mignon shook her head, the picture of wide-eyed innocence. She was well aware of Lucy's absence. In fact she had confidently expected it. True, Lucy had not *said* that she would remain away from the Campfire. Still, Mignon had every reason to believe that she would. She also realized the necessity for concealing that which she knew. Lucy would never betray her. She had no inclination to betray herself.

"That's queer." Jerry stared harder than ever at Mignon. "What time did she leave the nursery?"

"Six o'clock," came the ready information. "We left the nursery together. She walked part way home with me. I can't recall that she even mentioned the Campfire. She is such a peculiar girl. She does more scowling than talking. I find it very hard to talk to her. We have so little in common." Mignon looked politely regretful as she delivered these glib remarks.

"I guess that's so." Jerry's dry agreement brought an ominous flash to Mignon's black eyes. She wondered what was going on behind her inquisitor's stolid features.

"Then you don't know why Lucy isn't here tonight?" Jerry drove home her pertinent question with an energy that caused the angry red to mount to Mignon's cheeks.

"Why do you persist in asking me again what I have already answered?" she evaded pettishly. "I am not Lucy Warner's keeper. I have enough to do to attend strictly to my own affairs without bothering myself about her."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I quite agree with you." Turning on her heel Jerry set off toward the candy booth, her heavy brows drawn together in a ferocious scowl.

Before she reached it, Hal intercepted her with: "Miss Browning's going to stay for the dance. Last night Dan and Laurie and I made her promise that she would stay this evening. She's still in the girls'

dressing room. Go and get her, Jerry. I'll see that she has plenty of partners. All the high school fellows will feel honored to dance with her. She's the biggest feature of the Campfire."

Obediently betaking herself to the dressing room, Jerry discovered Veronica in the act of changing her butterfly costume for a demure but very smart pleated frock of dark blue Georgette crêpe.

"Are you surprised to know that Cinderella is going to stay for the ball?" saluted Veronica merrily. "Sorry I haven't an evening gown on hand. This will have to do." She fingered a fold of her blue gown. "Really, I ought to go home, but I couldn't resist accepting the invitation to stay for a few dances."

"I'm awfully glad you are going to stay." Jerry reached out and caught Veronica's hand. "I came after you to conduct you to the ball. Your gown is a perfect dear. It's very smart. It reminds me of a French gown I saw at the beach last summer."

"Poor servant girls can't afford such luxuries as imported gowns," laughed Veronica. Out of the corners of her gray eyes she cast a peculiar glance at Jerry.

Covert though it was, Jerry had not missed it. It was on her tongue to say boldly, "But are *you* really a poor servant girl?" However, she held her peace. She and Marjorie had agreed never to ask Veronica any personal questions. She decided that the gown

had perhaps been given Veronica by Miss Archer. The latter seemed very fond of her protégé. More than once Jerry had seen the two together, apparently on the most intimate terms.

"I'm almost ready," announced Veronica. "Wait just a minute until I bundle my dancing regalia into this suitcase. I'll have to carry my wings home. They won't go into the suitcase."

Jerry watched her fixedly as she deftly disposed of her dancing effects and triumphantly snapped the suitcase shut. The cloak of mystery which enveloped this charming girl piqued Jerry. She longed to be the one to tear it away and glimpse what it so effectually covered. There seemed little chance that she would ever do so. She did not agree with Marjorie that there was probably nothing behind it. She believed that for some personal reason Veronica was merely playing a part.

"Let's go and visit Marjorie first," she proposed as they left the dressing room. "She will be anxious to see you. By ten o'clock the last of the stuff in the booths will be gone. The Lookouts won't be sorry. It will give us all a chance to dance. We've been casting wistful glances at that nice smooth floor for three nights. Now and then we managed to steal away from the booths for a single dance."

"This *is* joyful news," beamed Marjorie, when five minutes later the two girls presented them-

selves in her booth. "We'll see that you have a good time, Ronny. The candy is all gone except a few boxes. The hard-working slaves of the Campfire will soon have a chance to enjoy themselves on the dancing floor for an hour or so."

Marjorie's merry prediction was fulfilled within the next hour. One by one the girls' booths were dismantled of their few remaining wares. The proceeds counted and safely disposed, the Lookouts and their senior classmates who had served with them were indeed free to visit the amusement booths, dance or enjoy themselves as fancy dictated.

Far from being neglected, Veronica Browning's popularity grew apace. The boys of Weston High School flocked eagerly to her standard. Strangely enough she seemed familiar with the various dances of the day, and many admiring eyes followed her graceful figure as she glided over the polished floor with one or another of her willing partners. Her radiant face gave signal proof that she was enjoying herself immensely, a fact that made the sextette of girls. who were closest to her, infinitely happy, too.

Mignon La Salle, however, was furiously jealous of her. Veronica's popularity was as a thorn to her flesh. Despite the knowledge that the elaborate white and gold evening frock she wore was the most expensive gown she had ever owned,

Mignon was obliged to sit out several dances. Hal, Laurie and Danny Seabrooke, on strict orders from Marjorie, had dutifully asked the French girl to dance. The majority of the Weston High boys were not so chivalrous. They did not like Mignon and steered prudently clear of her. Utterly disgruntled she left the Armory at eleven o'clock in a most unamiable frame of mind that spelled trouble for someone.

Just before midnight the Campfire ended with an old-fashioned Home Sweet Home waltz, followed by a bedlam of high school yells. The edge of youth is not easily dulled by work, particularly if that work be of a pleasant nature. The little frolic with which the Campfire ended was a most enthusiastic affair. The consensus of opinion was, that the Campfire ought to be a yearly event, and eager plans cropped up wholesale regarding what should be done at the next one. Roughly estimated, it was believed that the profits would exceed one thousand dollars. Divided equally between the Guards and the Lookouts it would go far toward solving their financial problems.

Following the excitement of the past three days, the peace of Sunday descended like a welcome mantle on the tireless promoters, who were forced to the conclusion that they were a trifle tired after all. It may be said to their credit that they did not fail to attend Sunday morning services in their

respective churches, and more than one silent prayer of thankfulness ascended to the God they devoutly worshipped. Marjorie in particular was moved to offer up reverent thanks, adding a humble little petition that she might be guided always to seek the right and cling to it.

On Sunday afternoon Jerry Macy appeared at the Deans shortly after dinner, proposing that she and Marjorie pay Lucy Warner a call.

"We'd better go and see Lucy ourselves," she counseled, "and not waste any more time wondering why she was among the missing last night."

"All right. I am willing. Captain won't care. She and General have gone for a ride. I'll leave word on the official bulletin board to let them know where I am bound for and when to expect me home."

Writing a hasty note, Marjorie tucked it into a small bulletin board, hung in the hall.

It was a rather long walk to the Warrens' unpretentious little home. As they traversed the stretch of field leading directly up to it, Marjorie was forcibly reminded of a winter day when she had floundered across that very field through the snow on the errand of mercy which had ended in Lucy Warner's unexpected revelation. To-day the open space of ground lay brown and frozen. It looked even more desolate than when covered with snow.

"I'm thankful I don't have to live in that house!" Jerry's exclamation broke up her reverie. "It's a cheerless-looking place, isn't it?"

"That is what I thought the first time I came here," nodded Marjorie. "I was just thinking of that day last winter when I waded through the snow to get to it. That was the day I came down with tonsilitis."

"I remember. You were all in when you left us to come here. You never told me anything about that call."

Marjorie smiled whimsically. She had never given anyone the details relating to that particular call. She now replied to Jerry's remark merely with: "Oh, I took Lucy a basket of fruit, went upstairs to her room and talked with her quite a while. When I went to her house I felt rather ill. My feet were wet from plowing through the snow. While I was there I forgot about it. When I started away from her house I had to wade through the snow again and then I went home and had tonsilitis."

"Humph!" ejaculated Jerry. "You certainly took a lot of trouble for her. She must have realized it, too, for she's been your fervent worshipper ever since. I hope Mignon hasn't told her a lot of things that will undo all the good you've done. Lucy has been a changed girl since you and she became friends."

"I am very fond of her. She is the brightest girl I have ever known." Marjorie spoke with admiring sincerity. The two friends had left the field behind them and were now proceeding up the straggling path that led up to the house. "I do hope she is at home."

"Umm!" was Jerry's sole comment. Her sharp eyes were intently scanning the front windows of the house as though seeking to discover whether its tenants were within. Arrived at the door, she peered about in search of a bell. Finding none she doubled a plump fist and rapped energetically on a weather-stained panel of the door. An instant's silence ensued. Listening acutely neither girl heard the sound of approaching footsteps from within. Failing to elicit a response, Jerry beat a loud tattoo upon the panel.

"There's no one at home," sighed Marjorie disappointedly.

"Come on. We might as well go." The command held a touch of aggressiveness. "I could wear my hand out thumping it on the door for all the good it would do."

Sensing the aggressive note in Jerry's voice, Marjorie attributed it to the stout girl's natural impatience of delay.

"It's a shame; a burning shame!" They were half way down the walk when Jerry thus delivered herself.

"Why, Jeremiah, what is it?" It had dawned upon Marjorie that something stronger than impatience had seized upon her friend.

"Marjorie, Lucy Warner *is* at home," stated Jerry deliberately. "As we went up the path I saw her through a window. She flashed across the end of the room farthest away from the window and disappeared."

"At home!" gasped Marjorie. "Then she must have seen us coming and——"

"Beat it," supplemented Jerry with inelegant force. "What's the answer? Mignon, of course. We don't need to ask Lucy about it. We know now that what we suspect is a fact. If it weren't, Lucy would have answered my knock. What are you going to do about it?"

"I intend to see Lucy to-morrow morning and find out what the trouble is," came Marjorie's steady answer. "If she is angry with us, I shall know it the instant she speaks. We have no right simply to take it for granted that she is angry. We mustn't even blame Mignon until we know positively that she actually made mischief."

"Mignon is at the bottom of Lucy's grouch. Take my word for it," sputtered Jerry. "She has been trying to set Lucy against you ever since school began. It looks as though she'd succeeded at last. There's just this much about it, you have stood too much from that girl. I'm going to take a hand in

this affair and put Mignon where she belongs. Do you know where that is? I do. It's outside the club."

CHAPTER XIX

THE SIGN

It still lacked half an hour until school opened on Monday morning when an anxious-eyed little girl ran up the long stone steps to the building and steered a straight course for Miss Archer's office. Marjorie felt that she could not settle her mind on her studies until she had held an interview with Lucy Warner and ascertained the cause of her strange behavior. She, too, had a disheartening conviction that Mignon was responsible for it. She believed, however, that she could soon disabuse Lucy of whatever false impressions she now held.

"Good morning, Lucy," she called out cheerily as she entered the pleasant living room office. She had spied the secretary at the typewriter desk, her head bent low over her work.

Lucy made no response to the salutation, neither did she raise her head. A slow color stole into her pale cheeks, but she stubbornly riveted her eyes on the letter she was typing.

Her own color rising, Marjorie boldly approached

the belligerent secretary, halting a little to one side of her. With quiet directness she said: "Lucy, what has happened? Why are you angry with me?"

Slowly raising her head, Lucy eyed Marjorie with patent scorn. "Will you kindly go away and leave me alone?" she requested icily.

"No, I will not." Marjorie stood her ground. "I asked you a fair question; I deserve a fair answer."

"I have nothing to say." Lucy presented the uncommunicative appearance of a blank wall. Marjorie could not possibly know how much effort it cost Lucy to maintain this attitude. Secretly she was longing to pour forth all that Mignon had told her. Too late, she bitterly regretted her rash promise. Marjorie's grieved look seemed too real to doubt. Away from her, Lucy could believe her guilty of treachery. Face to face, it was another matter.

Yet Mignon had given her undeniable proof of Marjorie's duplicity. She could not overlook that. This dark recollection put her brief impulse toward softening to flight. Her own wrongs looming large before her, the many benefits she had received at Marjorie's hands were forgotten. Overridden by blind suspicion she allowed the ignoble side of her nature to spring into play. With deliberate cruelty she now said: "Miss Dean, you are seriously interfering with my work. I have no more time to spend

in useless argument." Gathering up a sheaf of papers from her desk, she rose and stalked toward the inner office, a stiff little figure of hostility.

With a sigh, Marjorie turned and walked dejectedly off in an opposite direction. Strangely enough she felt more sorry for Lucy than for herself. Her conscience entirely clear of wrong doing, she knew that poor Lucy was in the clutch of some dire misapprehension regarding herself which Mignon La Salle had instilled into her suspicious mind. What to do next the perplexed lieutenant did not know. It was useless to go to Mignon. She would undoubtedly profess absolute ignorance of the cause of Lucy's grievance. Jerry was still to be reckoned with. It now looked as though her captain's prophecy regarding Mignon was about to be fulfilled. Perhaps, after all, it would be best to allow Jerry to carry out her threat of holding a special meeting of the Lookouts to decide Mignon's fitness for further membership.

Marjorie intensely disliked the thought. Despite Mignon's love of intrigue, she made a good treasurer. The club accounts were perfectly kept by her. She had served faithfully at the Campfire. Her father had contributed generously to the club and to the Campfire. Mignon's forced resignation from the Lookouts would hurt him. Then, too, Lucy Warner had been warned against Mignon. Marjorie felt that Lucy herself was partially at

fault. She had shown herself over-credulous and ungrateful. Mentally weighing the pros and cons of the affair, the baffled peace-seeker grew momentarily more perplexed. She had prayed earnestly on the day before to be shown the right. Now she yearned for a sign that would plainly point out to her her duty.

"Did you see her?" was Jerry's first low-voiced question when at noon the two girls met in the senior locker room.

"Yes; but I can't tell you about it now," returned Marjorie soberly. "After school is over today I wish you and Connie to come to my house. We will talk it over then. I don't care to have anyone else know about it besides Connie."

"All right. That will suit me." Jerry appeared satisfied with Marjorie's decision. On the way home she steered prudently clear of all mention of either Mignon or Lucy, although Muriel Harding brought up the subject of the latter's absence from the Campfire on Saturday evening. As neither she, Irma, Susan or Harriet were able to offer any information, while Marjorie and Jerry refused to commit themselves, the topic soon died a natural death.

"Take a little run up to your house, Lieutenant," greeted Mrs. Dean, as Marjorie entered the living room "It will pay you to do so."

" 'To obey is a soldier's first duty,' " quoted Mar-

jorie merrily, coming to attention and saluting. She was off like a flash, her swift feet making short work of the ascent to her house. "Oh!" she breathed as she caught sight of a long florist's box on her center table. Three times she repeated the exclamation as she glimpsed its contents. Lifting a sheaf of long-stemmed, half-opened American Beauty roses from the box, she buried her face in their spicy fragrance. As she raised them a square white envelope dropped to the floor bearing the words: "To Miss Marjorie Dean."

Not recognizing the heavy, masculine script, she eagerly explored the envelope to ascertain who the giver might be. A faint cry of consternation escaped her as she hastily glanced at the signature before reading the note. Bundling the roses on the table, she sought the window seat and read:

"Dear Miss Marjorie:

"Will you allow me to try in some measure to express my appreciation for your kindness to my daughter, Mignon? You have more than fulfilled the request I made of you on a certain afternoon of last Spring. It is of a truth a great gratification to me to see my Mignon thus surrounded by such estimable young women as yourself and your friends. It is most pleasurable to me that you have honored her with an office in your club. I rejoice

also to observe the important part she took in the Campfire. I feel that you will never regret the consideration you have so graciously shown her. If at any time you desire my services, you have but to command me. With extreme gratitude and the good wishes for your constant success,

"Most sincerely yours,

"Victor La Salle."

Marjorie stared at the note, divided between appreciation and dismay. It was a delightful note, but it was also most inopportune. In the face of it, she could not now advocate Jerry's plan. Sudden remembrance of her petition for a sign rushed over her. It had been granted. This, then, was the sign. It had served to remind her where her duty lay. All she could do was to accept it. It would not be easy. Jerry was up in arms. It would be difficult to win her over, especially after she had been informed of Lucy's unreasonable stand. Now it remained to Marjorie to do one of two things. She could go to Mr. La Salle and shatter his faith in her, or she could insist that Mignon must be allowed to escape punishment for her offenses against the Golden Rule. She painfully decided that for her father's sake, Mignon should be allowed to remain in the club. Having come to this decision she soberly gathered up her roses and carried them and

the letter downstairs to show both to her captain. To the latter she confided nothing of her latest problem. She had reserved the story to tell at some more fitting moment.

School over for the afternoon, the three Lookouts, who were presently to hold a private session at the Deans, strolled down the street with their chums, keeping a discreet silence regarding their intention. Muriel and Irma soon left them to take their turn at the nursery. Susan, Harriet and Veronica Browning eventually reached their parting of the ways, leaving the trio together.

"Now, Marjorie, tell us everything," was Jerry's instant command as they swung three abreast down the street.

Obediently Marjorie gave a faithful account of her interview with Lucy Warner. "I haven't the least idea why Lucy is angry," she confessed. "I don't know whether she is cross with me, or with the Lookouts."

"I can set you right about that," declared Jerry grimly. "Mignon told Esther Lind this morning that Lucy told her that she intended to have nothing more to do with you. That eliminates the rest of us. You're it, Marjorie. Now you see what sort of girl Mignon is. When I asked her why Lucy wasn't at the Campfire on Saturday night she pretended to be very innocent. It seems that she can't keep her troubles to herself. She has to tell

someone. After she told she asked Esther to promise that she wouldn't mention it to anyone. Esther wouldn't promise. She came straight to me with it. She thinks, as I do, that we ought to ask Mignon to resign from the club."

"Haven't you the least idea why Lucy is down on you, Marjorie?" was Constance's thoughtful question.

"No." Marjorie shook a despondent head. "I've never said or done anything to hurt her feelings."

"The club meets on Thursday night at my house," announced Jerry briskly. "What I propose to do is to call an informal meeting there to-morrow night, minus Mignon. We can state our grievances and have Irma set them down on paper. Then she can read them out. If everyone approves of them, we'll have Irma copy them and write a letter to Mignon asking for her resignation. We'll sign the letter, enclose the list of grievances and mail it to her. That's really the best way to do. It will save a lot of fuss."

"I think that would be most cruel and unkind, Jerry," Marjorie burst forth in shocked criticism.

"I fail to see it in that light." For the first time since the beginning of their friendship Jerry was distinctly out of sorts with her beloved friend. "Don't be so babyish, Marjorie. There's a limit to all things."

"I think what you just proposed would certainly

be the limit." Unconsciously Marjorie answered in Jerry's own slangy vernacular. "Let me tell you something." Rapidly she recounted the incident of the receipt of the roses and note from Mr. La Salle. "I must admit," she continued, "that I had intended to say to you to-night that you had better call a special meeting. I didn't realize then how humiliating it would be for Mignon. I saw those beautiful flowers and read that nice note and I felt dreadfully ashamed. It was just as though I had already failed to keep faith with Mr. La Salle. It is terrible to fail someone who believes in one. I've often said that to you."

"Of course it is. That's why I am so disgusted with Mignon. She has failed all of us," Jerry flashed back. "We can't have our club spoiled just to please Mignon's father. He makes me weary. It would be a good thing if he'd take a hand at reforming his daughter, instead of leaving the job to us." Jerry was growing momentarily angrier with Marjorie. "You ought to stand up for yourself, instead of being so foolish as to allow Mignon to make a goose of you," she finished rudely.

"Why, Jerry Macy!" Marjorie's brown eyes registered sorrowful amazement.

"Don't Jerry Macy me." The stout girl jerked her hand roughly from Marjorie's arm. "You make me tired, Marjorie Dean. If you can't fight for yourself then someone else will."

"I can fight my own battles, thank you." Marjorie's clear retort was freighted with injured dignity. Slow to anger, she was now thoroughly nettled.

"Girls, girls, don't quarrel," intervened Constance, who had thus far taken no part in the altercation. The trio had now passed inside the Deans' gate and halted on the stone walk.

"I don't wish to quarrel with Jerry," asserted Marjorie coldly, "but I cannot allow her to accuse me of being cowardly. You have said, Jerry," she eyed her explosive friend unflinchingly, "that Lucy Warner is angry with me, and not with the other girls. Very well. It is therefore Lucy's and my affair. We should be the ones to decide what shall be done with Mignon. Personally, I prefer to drop the matter. You may go to Lucy, if you choose, and ask her her views. I doubt, though, if she will give them. As it now stands I think it would be better to bear with Mignon for her father's sake. This is our last year in high school. Let us not darken it by trying to retaliate against Mignon."

"I think Marjorie is right, Jerry," declared Constance.

"Very good. Have it your own way. There will be no special meeting. Good-bye." Jerry whirled and darted through the half open gate, slamming it behind her.

Her lips quivering ominously, Marjorie watched

Jerry's plump figure down the street. Slow tears began to roll down her rosy cheeks. Groping blindly for her handkerchief, she buried her face in it with a grieved little sob.

"Don't cry, dear," soothed Constance, slipping a gentle arm about the sorrowful lieutenant. "By to-morrow Jerry will be all over being mad. She is too fond of you to stay cross. Inside of half an hour she will probably be telephoning you to say she is sorry. Let's go into the house and wait for her message. She'll be ready to make up by the time she reaches home."

"It's—as—much—my—fault as hers," quavered Marjorie. "I was cross, too. If she doesn't 'phone me by six o'clock, I'll call her up. It is babyish in me to cry, but I couldn't help it. Jerry and I have always been such dear friends. I'm not going to cry any more, though. Captain will wonder what the trouble is. I'm going to tell her everything, but not until to-night after dinner. You'd better stay and help me, Connie. Perhaps Jerry *will* telephone before then."

"All right, I will, thank you. I'll telephone Aunt Susan and let her know where I am."

On entering the house Delia met them with the information that Mrs. Dean had gone shopping but would be home by half-past six o'clock. When Constance had telephoned, they established themselves in the living room, keeping up a soft mur-

mur of conversation. Two pairs of ears were sharply trained on the hall, however, to catch the jingling ring of the telephone.

When six o'clock rolled around without the longed-for message from Jerry, Marjorie could no longer endure the suspense. Springing from her chair, she sought the 'phone and gave the operator the Macys' number. "Hello," she called in the transmitter.

"Hello," sounded a familiar voice. It was Jerry herself who answered.

"Is that you, Jerry? This is Mar——"

The forbidding click of the receiver cut the last word in two. Constance had not proved a successful prophet. Jerry Macy was still "cross."

CHAPTER XX

WHEN FRIENDS FALL OUT

"For goodness sake, Marjorie, will you kindly tell me what has happened?" Muriel Harding overtook Marjorie in the corridor on the way to her second morning recitation, fairly hissing her question into her friend's ear.

Marjorie turned a concerned face to her. She wondered what new difficulty was about to besiege her. "What do you mean, Muriel?"

"I haven't time to explain now. Here. Take these and read them. They were on my desk this morning. You'll understand later what I mean. I'll run over to your house on the way back to school this noon. Then we can talk. I'm so surprised I can't see straight." Thrusting two envelopes into Marjorie's hand, Muriel left her and hurried on.

Placing the envelopes in the back of her text book, Marjorie proceeded slowly down the corridor to her own recitation in French. Resisting the temptation to examine their contents, she devoted herself strictly to the lesson. The next hour, which would be spent in the study hall, would give her ample time to look at them.

Returned to the study hall and free at last to learn the cause of Muriel's agitation, she forced back the sharp exclamation of dismay that rose to her lips. Both envelopes were addressed; one to Muriel Harding, the other to Jerry Macy. Through the address on the latter a pencil had been drawn. Below the cancelled line it had been readdressed to Muriel. The writing on the one was Jerry's. The cancelled script on the other was Lucy Warner's. The re-addressing had been done by Jerry.

Marjorie's heart sank. She was almost sure of the nature of the notes within. Bracing herself in the seat, she drew Jerry's note from its envelope. It turned out to be exactly what she feared. Jerry

had tendered her formal resignation to the club. Lucy Warner's note contained the same information. It differed little from Jerry's, save for one sentence in the latter's note: "Kindly arrange to hold the club meeting at some place other than my home."

An intensity of bitterness toward Mignon filled Marjorie's heart as she fingered Jerry's note. She resentfully laid the blame for the whole affair at the French girl's door. Jerry, Lucy and herself had all been caught in the meshes of the net which Mignon had set for their unwary feet. Marjorie wrathfully vowed that she would expose Mignon's malicious mischief-making at the meeting of the club on Thursday evening. She hoped the members *would* demand Mignon's resignation. She deserved to be thus publicly humiliated. Yet the more she considered this revenge, the less it appealed to her. It savored too greatly of Mignon's own tactics. She finally decided to ask Connie to go home to luncheon with her. They could then talk matters over and agree on some plan of action by the time Muriel appeared.

Although Marjorie had prudently eschewed note-writing since that fateful afternoon during her junior year when she and Muriel had come to grief over the latter's note, she resolved for once to yield to temptation. Scribbling a few hasty lines to Constance, whose desk was not far from her own,

she managed successfully to send the missive. Glancing over it, Constance's eyes quickly sought Marjorie's. A smiling nod of her golden head informed the writer of the note that Connie would not fail her.

That point definitely settled, Marjorie speculated gloomily regarding whether Jerry's spleen would remain directed only against herself or whether she intended to desert from the sextette of girls to which she belonged. Would Muriel at once apprise Susan, Irma and Constance of Jerry's resignation from the club, or would she not? Hardly knowing what to expect, it was a relief to Marjorie when, on entering the locker room at noon, she saw no sign of either the stout girl or the other members of the sextette. The latter she guessed were waiting outside school. One look at four solemn-faced girls collected together on the opposite side of the street revealed to her that Muriel had put her three friends in possession of the news.

"Oh, Marjorie," she hailed. "Come here. After I spoke to you I decided to tell the girls about Jerry. It's a good thing I did. She hardly spoke to Susan and Irma this morning. They didn't understand, of course, and were dreadfully hurt."

A tiny pucker of vexation wrinkled Marjorie's forehead. Muriel's unexpected act had quite upset her plan of asking Connie's advice beforehand re-

garding Mignon. She would have to choose her own course of action at once. Should she arouse her friends' anger against Mignon and thus set in motion the wheel of vengeance, or should she offer an explanation of Jerry's wrath? She knew the latter well enough to believe that no one would hear any complaint against herself from the stout girl's lips. When especially roiled, Jerry was always uncommunicative. Slight irritations alone were productive of voluble protest on her part.

"What ails Jerry, Marjorie?" asked Irma anxiously. "None of us know. I hope you do."

"I know," cut in Constance quickly. "I only waited until Marjorie came before saying so. I'd rather she would tell you." Constance had hitherto prudently volunteered no information.

"There isn't much to tell." Marjorie's moment of doubt was past. Even as Irma spoke it was borne upon her that she had accepted Mr. La Salle's note as a sign. It but remained to her to do her duty. "Yesterday afternoon Jerry and I had a disagreement about Mignon. Connie was with us when it happened. The disagreement arose over something which Mignon had done that is personal to me. Yesterday noon I received a note of thanks and a box of American Beauty roses from Mr. La Salle. You can understand why he sent them. Jerry was very angry at Mignon and proposed that we should expel her from the club. As our dis-

agreement related to my affairs, I objected. Jerry said, 'All right. Have it your own way,' and left us. Later I called her on the telephone and she wouldn't talk to me. You already know of her resignation."

"You might know that Mignon was mixed in it in some way," cried Muriel. "I suppose this must have been the last straw or Jerry wouldn't have resigned. What are we to do without her? And Lucy Warner, too."

"She is angry with me, too." Marjorie's voice sounded rather weary. "I don't know why. I might as well tell you a little more. Jerry believes that Mignon made mischief between us. That's the reason she is down on Mignon. Though I may suspect Mignon of it, I can't prove it because Lucy will tell me nothing. It wouldn't be fair to ask Mignon to resign simply because she is suspected of turning Lucy against me. I told Jerry so, but she wouldn't see it in that light."

"We'd better all go to Mignon and make her own up to it," suggested Susan. "If she does, we'll ask her to resign from the Lookouts."

"I don't think it would be wise." It was peace-loving Irma Linton who spoke. "I don't believe Mignon could be made to own up to any wrong thing she has done. Besides, it would be a blot on the club escutcheon to ask her to resign. Almost every girl in school has a pretty fair idea of

why we asked Mignon to join the Lookouts. It is generally known that Marjorie took her home from Riverview in the Deans' automobile that night that Rowena ran away from her. It is also known that Marjorie has tried hard to help her in spite of all the mean things Mignon has done to her and said of her. Everyone respects Marjorie for it. Miss Archer has been heard to say that Marjorie is the highest-principled girl she has ever had in Sanford High. She and Jerry were the founders of the club. They asked Mignon to join it. Do you think it would reflect to Marjorie's credit, or Jerry's either, to force Mignon out of the club now? I don't. Jerry is in the wrong. Some day she'll see it. What we ought to do is not accept either hers or Lucy's resignation. Let them stay away until they choose to come back. They will both come back. I feel sure of it."

This long, forceful speech from gentle Irma had a potent effect upon her listeners. Susan, Muriel and Constance were deeply impressed. Marjorie, however, was red with embarrassment. Miss Archer's opinion of her, as quoted by Irma, amazed the blushing lieutenant. As for Irma's views on Mignon, they coincided with her own.

"Just see Marjorie blush," teased Muriel. "She wasn't expecting to hear Irma say so many nice things about her."

"I—you—it makes me feel foolish," Marjorie

stammered. "Please don't ever do it again, Irma. I agree with you about Mignon, though, and about not accepting the two resignations. Will you three girls stand by Irma and me in this at the meeting?" She was sure of Constance, but not so sure of Susan and Muriel.

"We will," came simultaneously from the two.

"Thank you," smiled Marjorie. "There's just one thing more and then we must hurry along. We've been standing here for almost half an hour. Mignon will probably be at the meeting. We five have agreed that she is to stay in the club. Between now and Thursday night we must see all the other members except Mignon and explain things. If they are agreeable to our plan, then at the meeting Muriel will act as president and read the resignations. I will move that they be not accepted and one of you must second the motion. Then we'll put it to a standing vote. Everyone must vote not to accept them and that will close the matter."

This plan was also approved and agreed upon. After deciding upon Muriel's home as a place of meeting on Thursday, the participants in the sidewalk conference set off briskly toward their homes to partake of sadly-neglected luncheons.

At the Thursday evening meeting of the Lookouts, eleven kindly conspirators followed to the letter the program laid out for them by Marjorie and Irma. There was only one rebel, and she dared

not assert herself openly. As the news of the two resignations had been carefully kept from her, Mignon La Salle was thunderstruck to learn that Jerry had left the club. Lucy's resignation she had confidently expected. She had also feared that she might be taken to task for it, and had come to the Hardings' home prepared to give battle royal.

Greatly against her will she rose with the others when the standing vote was taken regarding the non-acceptance of the two resignations. At heart a coward, she invariably evaded making a bold stand against opposition. She preferred underhanded warfare and would not show real fight unless cornered. When the fateful motion made by Marjorie and seconded by Irma had been passed, and Muriel had directed Irma to write Jerry and Lucy to that effect, Mignon longed to make strenuous objection. Craft conquering the impulse she made an inward vow that she would see to it that Jerry Macy, at least, never returned to the club. With Jerry gone from the Lookouts she would have greater leeway to do as she pleased.

"There's something else I wish to mention." Muriel's clear voice broke in on Mignon's dark meditations. "We wish no outsider to know that either Lucy or Jerry has tendered a resignation. I don't need to ask you to promise to keep it quiet. As Lookouts you know your duty in the matter. I think it would be wise, Irma," she turned to the

secretary, "to mention this in your letters to Lucy and Jerry. They will understand then, perhaps, just how kindly we feel toward them. I know that neither of them will give out the least information to anyone."

A decided scowl darkened Mignon's brow as she heard this plea for secrecy. She had already contemplated the enticing prospect for gossip which the resignations promised. She made mental reservation that she, at least, would not bind herself to silence. She would whisper it about, if she chose, at her own discretion. If it finally leaked out and she should be accused of spreading it, she could easily shift the blame upon either Lucy or Jerry; Lucy preferably. She would be a more satisfactory scapegoat.

Thus while eleven girls consulted earnestly together in an endeavor toward fair play toward all, the twelfth member of the club smiled ironically and busied her brain with endless treacherous schemes for holding her own position in the club without living up to its irksome obligations. Could the innocent, whole-hearted eleven, who had overlooked in her so much that was detestable, have read Mignon's mind, her connection with the Lookouts would have been summarily cut short. As it was, though they did not trust her, they patiently endured her and hoped for the best.

Highly elated over having thus escaped even a

word of reproach, Mignon drove home from the meeting in her runabout, amused rather than displeased at the somewhat restrained manner which her companions had exhibited toward her. The very next morning, under promise of secrecy, she retailed the forbidden story of the resignations to three different girls. They received it with ohs and ahs, and in due season imparted it to their most intimate friends. Within three days it had traveled far, and presently someone referred it to Jerry for confirmation.

Having received but sulkily refused to answer Irma's note, at heart Jerry fully appreciated the delicacy and good will of her friends. Her wrath now rose to a high pitch over being thus approached on the tabooed subject. Nor did she fail to attribute it to its true source. Her first move was to seek Lucy Warner.

Marching resolutely into Miss Archer's outer office on the morning of the fourth day after the receipt of Irma's note, she accosted stony-faced Lucy with, "See here, Lucy, I've a word to say to you. Did you get Irma Linton's note?"

"Yes." Lucy had the grace to blush. She was already feeling ashamed of her cruel treatment of Marjorie. The latter's sorrowful brown eyes haunted her and she was frequently tortured with the fear that she had been too hasty.

"Now listen to me." Jerry's voice was very

gruff. She blamed Lucy considerably for what had happened. "If any girl asks you if you've resigned from the club, just tell her to mind her own affairs. Don't give her a word of information. Do you understand?"

"Yes," repeated Lucy, almost humbly. She keenly sensed Jerry's disapproval of herself. "I will not give anyone an answer to that question. I had not intended to."

Jerry's tense features softened a trifle. "You've made a mistake, Lucy. No finer girl ever lived than Marjorie Dean. I don't know what Mignon La Salle has told you, but take my word for it, it's not true. I resigned from the club because I can't stand Mignon. That's why Marjorie and I fell out. Just the same, I like her better than any other girl I ever knew. But until she and the girls give up bothering with that deceitful, untruthful gossip, I shall have nothing more to do with her or them. I hope Mignon will overreach herself and get put out of the club. When that comes off, then back to the Lookouts for Jerry."

"I wish I could agree with you," stated Lucy primly, "but it is impossible. My reason for turning against Marjorie Dean is sound. I wish it were not."

"Answer me just one question. Was it Mignon who told you something against Marjorie?" Jerry fixed unblinking eyes on the other girl.

For a moment Lucy did not reply. She appeared to be turning something over in her mind. "I will answer you," she said finally. "I made a promise not to go to Marjorie with what was told me. I made no promise regarding anyone else. Yes, it was Mignon."

"And you believed Mignon?" Jerry's question came almost explosively.

"Yes. What she told me no one besides Marjorie and myself knew. No one except Marjorie could have possibly told her. I shall never speak to Marjorie again."

"I give it up. You certainly seem to know something that I don't." Jerry turned on her heel and walked to the door. Once outside she muttered: "Whatever you know that I don't, I'll make it my business to find out or my name's not Jerry Geraldine Jeremiah Macy."

CHAPTER XXI

A MESSAGE FROM JERRY

JERRY had a second mission to perform, however, which she hailed with anticipation. Cut off by her own obstinacy from former intimacy with her chums and from the work of the day nursery, she was an extremely lonely young person with a

great deal of idle time on her hands. Energetic Jerry loathed inaction. She therefore chose Mignon La Salle as her second subject for activity and lay in wait for her.

Two days passed, following her interview with Lucy Warner, before she found the desired opportunity to waylay the French girl. Setting off after school for a lonely session at Sargent's, at the curbstone before the shop she spied Mignon's runabout. Forging gleefully into her favorite haunt, she steered straight for Mignon, who sat in solitary grandeur at a rear table. Catching sight of Jerry, the arch plotter half rose from her chair as though about to make a prudent exit from the place.

"Sit down." Before her quarry could leave the table, Jerry had reached it. "Don't try to dodge *me*. I've been on the watch for you ever since you made trouble for Marjorie Dean. I'm not a Lookout now so I can tell you a few things."

"I won't listen to you." Mignon was now on her feet.

"Oh, yes, you will. If you don't, I'll go to your house and say my say to your father." Jerry looked grimly capable of executing the threat.

Fearful of such a calamity, Mignon reluctantly resumed her seat. "I'm not afraid of *you*," she sneered. "Say quickly what you have to say. I am in a hurry to go home."

"I'm not. Still I don't care to be seen talking

with you any longer than I can help." Jerry was brutally rude and she knew it. The time for keeping up appearances was past. "Now this is what I have to say. You are the most disloyal, mischief-making person I've ever known. You have no more right to be a Lookout than that soda-fountain has; my apologies to the soda-fountain. You can't fool me. You never have. I know you like a book. It was on account of you that I left the club. I'll never go back to it until you're out of it."

"You'll wait a long time then." Mignon gave a sarcastic laugh. "I shall stay in the club as long as I please and you can't prevent me."

"I'll do my best," challenged Jerry. "Remember that's a warning. I'm going to make it my business to find out what you told Lucy Warner about Marjorie. When I do you'll hear of it in a way you won't like."

"You'll never find out," taunted Mignon scornfully. "Lucy won't tell you and I certainly sha'n't. No one else knows." Taken off her guard she had rashly admitted the very thing Jerry was endeavoring to make her say.

"I'm going to know," assured Jerry tersely. "I've already made you say that you did tell Lucy something hateful about Marjorie. Now you can beat it. I've warned you! Oh, yes. If you circulate any more reports in school about Lucy's and

my resignations, I'll put a notice on the bulletin board warning the girls to pay no attention to your tales. I'll see that it stays there, too, long enough to do some good." With this parting shot Jerry turned abruptly away and walked out of the shop, her primary desire for ice cream quite forgotten.

As she plodded slowly down the street toward home, Jerry solemnly considered the stubborn stand she had taken against the Lookouts. She was not in the least pleased with herself. To continue to hold herself aloof from Marjorie, in particular, whom she adored, promised to be a dispiriting task. Still she was determined to do it. She argued that to go back to the club and admit that she had been in the wrong would merely make her appear ridiculous. She contemplated her self-exile from her friends with small joy. Over-weening pride, however, caused her to gloomily accept it. Her sole consolation lay in the thought that unbeknown to her chums she would further their mutual interests in every possible way. The idea of thus becoming an unsuspected source of good to them, held for her a morbid fascination. While they believed her to be antagonistic, she would secretly be just the opposite. This beneficent but somewhat absurd resolution was exactly what one might expect from Jerry.

Though she could not know it, it was the precise conclusion at which her chums had already

arrived. They knew her better than she knew herself. When she had deliberately ignored Irma's friendly note, her five chums had consulted earnestly together regarding what they had best do. Irma and Constance proposed that the five should visit her in a body, in an endeavor to win her back. Muriel, Susan and Marjorie opposed such a measure. "It wouldn't do the least bit of good," Muriel had emphatically declared.

Marjorie had quietly echoed Muriel's opinion, adding: "Let dear old Jerry alone, girls. She must work out her own salvation. When she comes back to us it must be of her own free will. She hasn't really left us, you know. She'll always be a Lookout, heart and hand."

As December rushed on its snowy way toward the holiday season, it became somewhat difficult for Marjorie to practice what she had preached. Jerry's desertion left a huge blank in her life that could not be filled. The brusque, good-humored stout girl had formerly been her most ardent supporter in making Christmas merry for the poor of Sanford. The little folks at the day nursery loudly bewailed her absence from their midst.

Mrs. Macy and Hal, who had learned the deplorable circumstances from Jerry's own lips, held more than one energetic but futile argument with her in an effort to reduce her to reason. She met these earnest admonitors with an unyielding stolidity

that caused them both to retire from the field in disgust. Whenever she chanced to meet her chums she greeted them with a cool civility that was infinitely more annoying than no greeting would have been. She marched defiantly to and from school by herself, preferring her own company to that of the Sanford High students outside the intimate circle of girls in which she had once moved.

She made but one exception to them. She was occasionally seen in company with Veronica Browning. The mystery surrounding the latter fascinated her. Then, too, she greatly admired this delightful girl. Although Veronica had learned of Jerry's self-made Coventry, she never referred to it when with the latter. From Marjorie, who had been quick to note Jerry's predilection for Veronica, she had received instructions to do all she could to lighten the young rebel's self-imposed burden. Of her own free will she had offered her services in Jerry's place at the day nursery. She had calmly informed the belligerent of her intention before doing so. Jerry had stared hard at her and merely said: "Go ahead and do it. You won't hurt my feelings. Are you sure you can spare the time?" Veronica had answered in the affirmative and the subject had been immediately dropped.

The week preceding Christmas saw the Lookouts deep in preparations for the day of days. There was to be a wonderful gift-laden tree at the nur-

sery for the children, and the usual yearly task of supplying the Sanford poor folks with holiday cheer was also carried on with a will. Marjorie's home became a headquarters for the tireless workers and the Lookouts spent many fruitful and pleasant hours there. Even Mignon condescended to lend her presence on one or two occasions and surprised her companions by actually doing a little work. Since her encounter with Jerry she had been extremely ill at ease. She had a coward's respect for the plain-spoken stout girl, and she now stood more in fear of her than ever. The very day after Jerry had accosted her in Sargent's her father had promised her an expensive electric limousine as a commencement present, provided she conducted herself in exemplary fashion until then. Mignon had therefore decided to walk softly until this prize was safely in her possession.

Christmas came and went, leaving behind for Marjorie the usual liberal amount of remembrances from her friends. It was a less happy Christmas, however, than that of the previous year. Jerry's desertion weighed heavily upon her. The two girls had always exchanged holiday gifts and calls. This year, determined to make no exception, Marjorie had selected and sent her usual good-will present to Jerry. Irma, Constance, Susan, Muriel, Harriet and Esther Lind had done likewise. From Jerry they had received nothing in return except their

own gifts. Each package contained a card, on each of which had appeared the same Jerry-like message: "Keep this and send it to me later. Mignon may not always be a Lookout."

This pertinent message provoked a certain amount of merriment on the part of the recipients. Nevertheless, an undertone of sadness lurked in the laughter. Jerry was Jerry and could not be imitated, duplicated nor replaced. They had missed her sorely at the gay round of parties that filled their holidays. Her unexpected state of rebellion had also completely upset her brother Hal's plans for the Macys' usual Christmas dance. He and Jerry exchanged sharp words over what he termed her "bull-headedness" and for two weeks afterward they were not on speaking terms. All in all Jerry passed a most doleful Yuletide season for which she had only herself to blame.

CHAPTER XXII

MARJORIE DECIDES

The end of January brought with it mid-year examinations. It saw no change in the strained situation which Jerry had created. To all outward appearances she was as implacable as ever.

Only Jerry herself knew the difficulty of remaining adamant in the face of longing for the comradeship which she had repudiated. Long ago, when Mary Raymond had done precisely what she was now doing, Jerry had pointed out to Mary the folly of such a course. More than once, since her self-exile from her companions, Jerry had thought of this. Vengefully remembering that Mignon had also been at the root of Mary's difficulties, her bitterness against the French girl increased two-fold. She grew more determined than ever in her thus far fruitless effort to discover what Mignon had told Lucy Warner that had set the latter so strongly against Marjorie Dean. This learned, she was not quite decided upon what she would do next. That would depend entirely on the nature of Mignon's gossip.

While recalcitrant Jerry pursued her will-o-the-wisp quest for useful information, the Lookout Club were adhering steadily to their resolve to make their little organization a success. Despite the jolt they had suffered by reason of the withdrawal of their president, they continued to hope that she would eventually return to the fold. Regarding Lucy Warner's return they had little to say. Irma, Susan, Muriel and Constance, who were better posted than their fellow members on the inside details of Lucy's cavalier treatment of Marjorie, secretly disapproved of the close-mouthed secre-

tary's refusal to meet Marjorie frankly. As for the other Lookouts, Lucy's antagonistic behavior seemed to them quite in keeping with her past performances.

Thus matters dragged along through changeable, short-lived February and early March. During that period of time, however, the Lookouts put into effect the plan that had come to Marjorie at the time of the organization of the club. The project of the day nursery as the center of achievement she had reserved, broaching the subject of her plan until the more important enterprise should be firmly on its feet. Due to the excellent management of the Lookouts and the gratifying monetary returns from the Campfire, it was now in a flourishing condition. Their treasury boasted over eight hundred dollars, sufficient capital to defray the nursery's expenses until well into the next winter.

Their hopes were now set on making the Lookout Club a high school sorority, and the names of several juniors seemingly suitable to assume the responsibilities their senior sisters would relinquish with graduation, were already under discussion. The considerable amount of internal discord with which they had been forced to contend had not been such as to create adverse criticism on the part of outsiders. The club ranked high in public estimation. Knowing this, its members, with one exception, were earnestly desirous of maintaining that

high standard. On their integrity depended its establishment as a sorority.

The one exception was, of course, Mignon La Salle. She had no lofty ambitions and only one definite aim; the will to stir up mischief and thus keep her fellow members in hot water. Following her arraignment by Jerry, she had proceeded with caution. As the winter days glided by without bringing her the exposure which Jerry had threatened, she began to treat the matter lightly. So long as Jerry remained unsuccessful in ferreting out the reason for Lucy Warner's grudge against Marjorie, she felt herself secure. Thanks to Lucy's unassailable secrecy, she believed Jerry had small chance of learning what she did not wish known. Bent on making assurance doubly sure she had sought Lucy to remind her of her promise. The latter had received her with the utmost frigidity. She stated shortly that she had told Marjorie Dean nothing. Further, she had no intention of giving her any information. Regarding what she had said to Jerry, she was silent. That had nothing to do with her promise to Mignon. What Jerry had said to her, however, unconsciously influenced Lucy to treat the French girl with dignified disdain.

Mignon did not relish the snubbing. She accepted it because she dared not resent it. Having gained her point she could afford to dismiss it with

a shrug. If she could continue to ward off possible disaster until her graduation from high school in June, the danger point would then be passed. A new set of Lookouts would replace the old, the limousine her father had promised her would be won, and her triumph over these stupid girls be complete. Another year would see her in some far-off college, well beyond their reach.

It was early in February when Marjorie made known her plan to the club. At one of their regular meetings she had risen to speak earnestly on the subject of high school fellowship. She had expressed her belief that as Lookouts it was the business of the club to do something toward creating a spirit of comradeship among the four classes of Sanford High School. She had then proposed that once in two weeks on Friday evening the Lookouts should hold a reception in the gymnasium to which the pupils of the Sanford High School should be invited. It would be a strictly informal affair, instituted with the purpose of amalgamating the four classes into one big high school family. There might be a short program composed of volunteer stunts. There were sure to be present enough girls who would gladly take turns at the piano for dancing. The club could serve light refreshments at its own expense and the reception as a whole could not fail to promote better acquaintance and understanding. She had already spoken of it to Miss

Archer, who had gladly granted her permission to use the gymnasium.

Such was the project which Marjorie had outlined. It had met the instant approval of her hearers and before the meeting ended the details of the plan had been settled and the date for the first reception set for the second Friday evening in February. On the eventful night the four classes attended the reception almost to a member, enjoyed themselves hugely after the fashion of carefree youth, and departed at eleven o'clock, the consciousness of a well-spent evening pervading their cordial good-nights to their schoolmate hostesses. Marjorie's thoughtfulness for others had been the mean of bringing happiness to more than one girl in Sanford High School to whom the social side of school had formerly meant little. Among such a large body of students there were many whose opportunities for social pleasures were few and far between. To these wistful lookers-on, the chance to become participants in this new and diverting phase of school life was a boon indeed.

Greatly to her surprise, Majorie discovered in Veronica Browning a devoted advocate of the club's new movement. Of her own free will she assured Marjorie of her willingness to take part in the program, should her services be desired. Her offer was joyfully accepted, for her fame as a dancer had traveled the rounds of Sanford. At the

second reception she became the feature of the evening. Lost in wonder of her art, beside it her lowly position in life paled into insignificance. She came in for an avalanche of girlish admiration which she accepted with the modesty of one who attached little importance to her accomplishment.

It was perhaps a week after Veronica's terpsichorean triumph that it suddenly occurred to Marjorie to ask her to reconsider her earlier refusal to join the Lookout Club. Since the latter's decided negative to the proposal, made at the time of the organization of the Lookouts, Marjorie had not repeated her request. Veronica had then refused it with finality. Afterward the subject had never been reopened between them. In lieu of the fact that Veronica had done much toward making the Campfire a success, and continued to help the Lookouts in their various enterprises, Marjorie cherished the conviction that Mignon La Salle's certain opposition to Veronica as a member could no longer be respected. Privately she announced her views to her chums, who were of the same mind. She, therefore, resolved again to lay the subject before her friend and plead with her to reconsider her refusal.

Chancing to meet Veronica in the street one March morning on the way to school she greeted her with: "I've a special favor to ask of you, Ronny, and don't you dare refuse."

"It is granted," smiled Veronica.

"Now I've caught you!" Marjorie laughed mischievously. "You can't back out. The Lookouts wish you to join the club, Ronny. I wish it most of all."

"I guessed that to be the special favor," remarked Veronica quietly.

"You did?" Marjorie's brown eyes widened in surprise. "Then you must really wish to join us after all!"

"Yes! I am quite ready to become a Lookout," was the amazing announcement. "I know you are wondering why I have changed my mind about it. Before I explain, I'll say that I am glad you asked me again to join your club. It is another proof of your fair-mindedness."

"I don't quite understand." Marjorie regarded Veronica in bewilderment. It was almost as though this astonishing girl had, in some mystifying fashion, divined the thought-process by which she had arrived at her decision.

Veronica laughed. "You mean you can't imagine how I came to understand why you asked me again to become a Lookout."

"Yes; that is true. But how could you possibly guess it? You amaze me, Ronny."

"You don't realize, Marjorie, that I have come to know you very well," returned Veronica with sudden intensity. "You are the sort of girl that must play fairly, or not at all. You were not en-

tirely satisfied with our agreement of last fall. I knew it then. I knew, too, that it was wisest for me to stay out of the club. Now the situation has changed. Our delicate consideration for a certain person has been wasted. You feel that my interest in the progress of the Lookouts has been, and is, greater than hers. Frankly, I know it to be so. I wish to join your club for two reasons. First, because this lawless, headstrong girl should be shown that the good of the Lookouts must be regarded above her personal prejudices; second, because of my own pleasure in the association."

"You've said the very things I have thought, Ronny." Marjorie spoke as one who has been miraculously relieved from a cumbersome burden. "I am glad you see things as I do. I shall propose you for membership on Thursday evening at the club meeting. If—a certain person——" She paused. "Why shouldn't we say her name? If Mignon doesn't approve, then she'll have to disapprove. It will be a case of eleven against one. The majority rules, you know. The eleven will surely be delighted to welcome you as a Lookout. Do you mind if I tell them the good news beforehand?"

"As you please." Veronica slipped an affectionate arm into one of Marjorie's. "You are true blue, Lieutenant," she said a trifle unsteadily. "All my life I shall be glad that I have known a girl like you.

Some day I shall try to prove to you how much I appreciate your friendship."

"It's just the other way round, Ronny." Marjorie's earnest assurance rang with affection.

Arrived at the school building their confidential talk ended. Marjorie took her seat in the study hall feeling singularly inspirited. Veronica's decision to join the Lookouts embued her with fresh courage to face the storm of protest which Mignon would undoubtedly raise when Veronica's name was proposed for membership. Thinking it over she reconsidered her idea of telling the Lookouts beforehand. It would be hardly fair to leave Mignon out of the knowledge, yet she did not wish her to know it until she herself proposed Veronica's name at the meeting. This course of action seemed infinitely more discreet. She was positive that no one save Mignon would raise an objection. Very charitably she hoped that the latter would not create a scene and thus lay herself open to the certain displeasure of the other girls. Her indignation aroused, hot-headed Muriel Harding was quite capable of demanding Mignon's resignation then and there. Marjorie was definitely settled on one point. If, in the heat of anger, Mignon should tender her resignation, it should also mark the end of her personal interest in the French girl's behalf. She would go to Mr. La Salle and ask release from her promise.

CHAPTER XXIII

A STORMY SESSION

"Is there any new business to be brought before the club?" inquired Muriel Harding in her most presidential manner.

The Lookouts were in august session in the Atwells' cozy living room, which the mere members of the family, aside from Susan, had obligingly vacated while the club held sway. Seated in a semi-circle that curved the lower end of the large room, nine girls fixed attentive eyes on Muriel, who occupied a wide-armed chair a few feet in front of them. At a table on the right, Irma and Mignon were seated side by side. Her interest centered on her account book, the latter did not trouble to raise her eyes as Muriel spoke.

From the last right-hand chair in the circular row, Marjorie Dean rose. "I wish to propose the name of Veronica Browning for membership into the Lookout Club," she announced in low, clear tones.

A wavering sigh swept the semi-circle as Marjorie reseated herself. This was, indeed, new business. Muriel Harding stared at Marjorie in mild astonishment. All interest in her accounts vanished, Mignon La Salle leaned forward over the table,

her black eyes snapping. For a long moment no one spoke.

"I second the motion." Harriet Delaney's firm accents shattered the silence.

"It has been regularly moved and seconded," stated Muriel, "that Veronica——"

"I rise to object." Mignon La Salle leaped rather than rose from her chair, her face dark with protest. "I object seriously to admitting a servant into membership of the Lookout Club."

"And *I* rise to object against the word 'servant' as applied to my friend Veronica Browning." Marjorie was again on her feet, her lovely face set in stern lines. "There is no disgrace in being a servant," she gravely rebuked. "It is the way in which the word has been spoken that makes it objectionable. The club owes a great deal to Veronica. All of you know how willingly she has offered us her services. We have gladly accepted them. It now becomes us to ask her to honor us by joining our club."

"Honor!" sneered Mignon, tossing her black head in disdain. "A very queer sort of *honor*. I should term it disgrace. I will not have this presuming kitchen maid in the club. Who knows what sort of parents she has, or where she came from. She is sharp enough to make Miss Archer and a few other persons believe that she is something wonderful, but she can't fool me. No doubt she came

from some third-rate, stranded theatrical company. She has been very careful not to say a word about herself to anyone. Marjorie Dean ought to be ashamed to propose that we turn our club into a servants' hall."

With every word, Mignon's voice had risen. Caution thrown to the winds she remembered nothing save her hatred against Veronica. Before she could continue a babble of angry voices assailed her from all sides. The dignified session of the Lookouts bade fair to end in an uproar of rebuke hurled in noisy entirety at Mignon.

"Order!" shrieked Muriel, wildly waving her arms. "Stop it, girls. The Atwells will think we've gone crazy."

Her energetic counsel brought the outraged belligerents into a knowledge of where they were. Gradually they subsided into threatening murmurs that ended in a much-needed but ominous quiet.

"Mignon, you are the one to be ashamed." Muriel bent severe eyes on the storm-swept girl, who now sat with elbows propped upon the table, glaring sullenly at her equally sulky opponents. "Veronica Browning is a sweet, delightful, well-bred girl. I'm sorry I can't say the same of you. If you don't care to be in the same club with her, you know what you can do. You've caused us all to disgrace ourselves for the moment by quarreling with you. I'm going to say what I started to say when you

began this fuss. You will please not interrupt me again."

"I will if I choose," flung back Mignon. "You'd be only too glad to have me resign from the club. Well, I don't intend to do it until I get ready. I've been a good treasurer and you can't complain of me. If you——"

Muriel turned a deliberate back on the irate speaker. With dignified composure she again stated: "It has been regularly moved and seconded that Veronica Browning be admitted into membership of the Lookout Club. Those in favor, please rise; contrary remain seated."

Ten determined girls were on their feet before Muriel had finished.

"No, no, no!" objected Mignon at the top of her voice.

"Carried." Muriel still kept an uncompromising back toward Mignon.

"I won't stand it!" Rising, Mignon seized her book and took a step or two toward the door. Of a sudden she paused, as though clutched by an invisible hand. Backing toward her chair she sat down, a curious expression of malevolent resolve in her elfish eyes. Somewhat ashamed of their own untimely outburst, her fellow members found themselves more inclined toward pity than resentment. Though they cherished no liking for their lawless companion, they were disposed to regard her display

of temper as that of an obstreperous child, allowed too long to have its own way.

With the admission of Veronica to the club the business part of the meeting closed, greatly to the relief of all concerned. Immediately afterward, Mignon stalked haughtily from the living room, without a word to anyone. Darting up the stairs to the room which Muriel had reserved for her guests' use, she fairly flung herself into her coat and jammed her fur cap down upon her black curls. Down the stairs she sped and out of the house, announcing her departure by a reverberating slam of the front door.

Divining her intention, Susan Atwell had followed her to the stairs, determined to do her duty as hostess. When halfway up the flight, Mignon had reappeared at the head of the staircase, descending with a hurricane rush that precluded remark on Susan's part. Returning to the living room she asked Muriel crossly: "What are we to do with her?"

"We'd better hold a second meeting and see," replied Muriel. "Girls," she raised her voice, "please come to order again. I've something to say to you."

Gathered together at one end of the room, the group of girls promptly obeyed. Resuming her position of authority, Muriel burst forth with, "Something must be done about Mignon. I think she has

forfeited her right to membership. After what's happened to-night we can't allow her to keep on being in the club. We must ask her to resign."

Seven voices at once rose in hearty agreement. Only Marjorie, Irma, and Constance remained silent.

"With Mignon out of the club, Jerry will come back," reminded Harriet Delaney eagerly. "Irma ought to write Mignon to-night and mail the letter on the way home."

"That's my opinion," nodded Rita Talbot.

"Mine, too," sounded a faithful chorus.

"Perhaps we'd better wait until after the next meeting before taking such action," argued Marjorie soberly. "Just now I feel sure that we ought to ask for Mignon's resignation. Later I may not see it in that light. My decision will depend largely on the way Mignon treats Veronica at our next meeting. Her temper got the better of her to-night. Perhaps we had better give her another chance."

"That would be a good test. We mustn't be too hasty," cautioned generous Irma. "I believe with Marjorie that we should postpone our decision until after next Thursday night's meeting. Then if we are still of the same mind we shall feel that we have acted fairly."

"We've already been altogether too fair," sputtered Gertrude Aldine. "I don't see why we should feel any hesitation about sending Mignon that let-

ter to-night. The sooner it's sent, the sooner we'll have Jerry with us again."

"Jerry could be with us now, if she chose." Very quietly Constance answered Gertrude's impetuous reminder. "We should not use Jerry as an excuse for expelling Mignon from the club. We should consider only whether Mignon has failed so utterly as a member that we must expel her in self-defense. If we drive her out of the Lookouts, she will take it as a direct admission that we are afraid of her; that eleven members cannot stand together against one. If we prove loyal to our obligations, what chance will she have against us? Once she realizes this, either she will submit to what she can't change, or else she will resign from the club of her own accord. Only a little more than three months is left us of our senior year. Ought we to pass the name 'Lookouts' along to our successors with the stain of an expelled member on it? That is also a point to be considered."

"You and Marjorie and Irma are right, as usual," conceded Muriel Harding vexedly. "I suppose we ought to follow your advice. Perhaps Mignon will kindly take the matter out of our hands before then. Girls, are you satisfied to abide by the counsel of the Three Wise Women of Sanford?" she questioned humorously. "Has anyone any further serious objections? If so, please rise."

Pure loyalty to Marjorie Dean alone kept every

girl in her seat. Although each respected the counsel of Constance and Irma, Marjorie's wish now became her law. Her magnanimity of spirit was too great to be overlooked. Yet in her heart each hoped that pride would force Mignon into resigning from the Lookouts of her own free will before the week ended.

Could the Lookouts have looked into Mignon La Salle's own room, at the very moment in which they agreed upon a week's clemency, their fond hope would have died a sudden death. Her door carefully locked against parental intrusion, Mignon was rapidly penning a lengthy letter to Rowena Farnham. Her thin lips curved themselves into a malicious smile as her pen sped over the paper. It was late when she finished the writing of it, and stole cat-footed down the front stairs and out of the house to mail it. Having come to a standstill in her own capacity for trouble-making, she had appealed for advice to one who could be depended upon to give her fresh impetus.

CHAPTER XXIV

A TREASURELESS TREASURER

During the week that followed Mignon's fiery outburst against Veronica at the club meeting Muriel Harding received no welcome letter from the

former announcing her resignation from the Lookouts. To all appearances such was not her intention. When the next Thursday evening rolled round, the Lookouts, including their latest addition, Veronica Browning, met at Gray Gables. To the secret disappointment of the majority Mignon was not among those present. With the exception of Irma, Marjorie and Constance, the others were impatient to see how the French girl would behave toward Veronica. The latter had been privately warned by Marjorie as to what might possibly occur and had agreed to meet Mignon's probable discourtesy with silence.

It was not until the meeting had reached the point of "unfinished business" that the question relating to the absent rebel came up for discussion.

"Girls," began Muriel, "you all know what comes under this head. Let me hear from you informally."

"It looks as though we'd have to wait another week and see what happens," observed Susan Atwell. With a faint giggle she added: "When is a test not a test?"

A ripple of ready laughter followed this suggestive question.

"Perhaps it is all for the best," remarked Irma philosophically. "We may find after all that——"

A reverberating peal of the door bell cut short her discourse. Every pair of bright eyes became

questioningly directed toward the sound. Was it their graceless treasurer who now demanded admittance? Followed a moment of expectant waiting, then a maid appeared in the curtained doorway of the library in which the Lookouts were gathered.

"Here's a note for you, Miss Muriel," she announced as she stepped into the room. Delivering it into Muriel's hand she promptly disappeared.

"Humph!" ejaculated Muriel as she stared at the tiny, pale gray envelope. "By your leave, Lookouts," she added with a nod to her friends. Tearing open an end of the envelope she drew forth its contents. A frown of displeasure knitted her brows as she scanned the unexpected message. Raising her eyes from it she said: "This note is from Mignon La Salle. I will read it to you. She writes:

"'MISS HARDING:

"'I have decided not to attend the further meetings of the club. I shall still hold my office as treasurer. If you wish to consult me on business matters or desire to draw upon the treasury for checks with which to meet the various current expenses, kindly write me at my home. From time to time, I shall send you my official report.

"'Yours truly,

"'MIGNON LA SALLE.'

"This is the last straw," declared Muriel grimly. "It seems to me that our duty is plain."

"I am of the same mind." Marjorie Dean's decided tones sent a little thrill over her listeners. It was evident to all that her limit of endurance had been reached. "I move," she continued with calm finality, "that Irma write Mignon La Salle stating that we accept her note as a resignation from the Lookouts and request her to turn over the club's books, now in her possession, to our president Muriel Harding."

Constance Stevens instantly seconded the motion. It was voted upon and carried with an alacrity that bespoke the intense approval of those assembled.

Again Marjorie was heard. "I nominate Susan Atwell to fill the now vacant office of treasurer."

It is needless to say that this motion was also promptly seconded, voted upon and carried. The unbelievable had come to pass, Marjorie Dean had at last renounced the difficult responsibility she had shouldered so long. As a result of this revelation the dignity of the meeting collapsed into a babble of excited opinions. Muriel made no effort to restore order but drew her chair into the circle and entered willingly into the spirited discussion that centered around Mignon La Salle.

"I'm glad you've come to your senses, Marjorie Dean," stoutly asserted Daisy Griggs. "I must say

I was surprised when you made that first motion."

"I have just one thing to say." Marjorie's brown eyes were filled with purposeful light. "Then I wish to drop the subject of Mignon. She has defied the club and so forfeited her right to membership. When the books of the club have been placed in Muriel's hands, I shall go to Mr. La Salle and insist on being released from my promise. That's all."

Rising, she walked to a window, half ready to cry. It had been very hard for her to contemplate the idea of seeking kindly Mr. La Salle with such unpleasant information. She felt keenly the humiliation of being obliged to admit to him her failure. Yet as Muriel had said it was, indeed, "the last straw." As she stood looking out at the white, moonlit night she was driven to believe that Mignon La Salle's better self would ever remain a minus quantity.

Mignon's astounding stand having been sufficiently discussed, the Lookouts devoted the rest of the evening strictly to enjoyment. Constance sang, Veronica danced, the others also contributing various entertaining stunts. A most delectable little supper was disposed of to the accompaniment of sprightly conversation and merry laughter, thereby proving that the loss of a faithless treasurer was small loss indeed.

It had been a simple matter to accept Mignon's note as a resignation and elect a new treasurer. It

had been equally easy to inform Mignon to that effect by letter. When, at the end of the week, however, Muriel received neither the books of the club, nor any response whatever from Mignon, it was decided that Muriel and Irma should introduce Susan to the Vice-President of the First National Bank of Sanford and request that the Lookouts' account be transferred to her guardianship. She would then receive a check and bankbook and thus be fitly equipped to perform her new duties.

Irma Linton had made a habit of incorporating into the minutes of the meetings the treasury reports which Mignon had read out to the club from time to time. This data would now prove invaluable to Susan in opening a new book, should Mignon obstinately delay the return of the one in her possession. Believing that she might do this, Muriel and Susan quietly agreed to take steps to attain complete independence of her.

Not desiring to act too hastily, they waited with commendable patience until it lacked but a day until the next meeting of the Lookouts. Although they daily saw Mignon at school, it was as though they had never known her. She haughtily ignored the Lookouts and they made no effort to change the state of marked hostility she had willed. Having notified her of their wishes through the proper channels of the club, they now maintained a dignified silence, refusing to act other than impersonally.

At the close of the Wednesday morning session, Susan and Irma set out for the First National Bank to put their mutual agreement into effect. Ushered into the vice-president's office, they were coldly received by that august person. His very manner was such as to indicate personal injury to him on their part. Rather timidly Muriel introduced Susan and stated her request.

His air of distant courtesy relaxing he said in a mollified tone: "Ah, yes, I understand. It is your intention to re-deposit the funds of your club in this bank. We supposed them to have been permanently removed. It was unnecessary in your retiring treasurer, Miss La Salle, to draw them out. I shall be pleased to adjust matters." Privately he was thinking the whole affair quite characteristic of a bevy of heedless school girls.

A united gasp of astonishment welled up from two throats.

"Draw them *out?*" Muriel's voice rose on the last word. "But we didn't——!"

"Why—what——" stammered Susan.

Muriel drew a long breath. "When did Miss La Salle draw out this money, Mr. Wendell?" she asked, striving to speak casually.

"On Tuesday, I believe. Just a moment. I will ascertain positively if I am correct in my statement." Rising, he bowed courteously to his young visitors and left the office.

"Mignon has *taken* the Lookouts' money," burst forth Susan, the instant the two were left to themselves. "What are we to do about it? We'd better explain everything to Mr. Wendell and ask his advice."

Muriel stared at Susan, but made no reply. The enormity of Mignon's latest misdeed fairly stunned her. Despite the shock, there now rose within her a curious impulse to protect rather than expose this lawless girl.

"I think we had better not explain things to him now," she said slowly. "It's like this. Mignon has drawn our money from the bank on purpose to spite us. She doesn't want it for herself. What she intends to do is to hold it until her term is up as treasurer. She knows that we shall need a part of it to meet the monthly expenses of the day nursery, but she wants to make us send to her for it. She intended to do this money stunt when she wrote that letter. We can't decide what we ought to do about her until we talk to the others."

Mr. Wendell's entrance into the office prevented further confidential talk between the two.

"I find my statement correct," he announced. "The entire account, amounting to seven hundred and forty-six dollars, sixty-seven cents, was turned over to Miss La Salle on Monday. Since you wish to redeposit this sum of money in Miss Atwell's name, I would advise that she and Miss La Salle

come here together with it at their convenience. Then we can handle the matter satisfactorily, I assure you."

"Thank you, Mr. Wendell." Muriel rose, with as much dignity as she could master. "As there has evidently been a mistake made about our account we will be obliged first to take it up with the club before redepositing the money. You will hear from me in regard to it within two or three days. We have no wish to place our funds in another bank."

With a brief farewell to the nonplussed bank official, Muriel and Susan made their escape into the street, where they could unburden themselves undisturbed. Before school closed that afternoon Marjorie, Constance and Irma had been put in possession of the full news. That evening at the Deans', five girls met in solemn conclave. Long and earnestly they discussed the unpleasant situation. The fruit of that discussion took shape in a letter to Mignon requesting the immediate turning over of the Lookouts' bank account to Susan Atwell. Under the circumstances it was an exceedingly mild letter. It was mailed special delivery in the hope that the wrongdoer would receive it in time to repair her error before the club met on the following evening.

Mignon, however, had no intention of thus yielding so easily. Her letter to Rowena Farnham had brought her an immediate reply from the latter

which pleased her immensely. Acting upon Rowena's unscrupulous advice she had boldly marched to the bank, and withdrawn in actual cash the club's entire capital. Furthermore, she had locked it away in a secret drawer of her writing desk and vowed to leave it there until the expiration of her term as treasurer.

CHAPTER XXV

THE TREACHEROUS TREASURER AND THE SLIPPERY SLEUTH

INDIGNATION ran rife among the Lookouts when on Thursday evening they came into the dismaying knowledge that thanks to Mignon, Susan Atwell had become a treasureless treasurer. Irma was instructed to write the culprit a letter, considerably sharper than had been the one of the previous day. As a last touch every member of the club affixed her name to it. It failed completely in its purpose. Neither by word nor sign did Mignon show any indication that she had received it.

Next a committee, composed of Muriel, Susan, Irma and Marjorie, waylaid her on the road home from school. She met their reproaches with scorn, expressed uncomplimentary opinion of them and snapped derisive fingers in their faces. Frequent

mischievous letters from Rowena Farnham had greatly influenced her to continue in her bold stand. The fact that her father had left Sanford on a protracted business trip had also much to do with it. Though far from the scene of action, Rowena was enjoying hugely the triumphant progress of the affair as reported faithfully to her by Mignon.

The one way open to the Lookouts, they magnanimously refused to take. Though they were in sore need of money to meet their expenses it had been agreed after much rueful discussion that they would not call upon outsiders to adjust their difficulties. Though she did not deserve consideration, nevertheless Mignon received it at their hands. Very loyally they guarded their secret cross lest the misdeed of their faithless schoolmate should become known and she herself branded as a thief. As Marjorie had argued, Mignon was after all just a schoolgirl and her reputation for honesty must be protected. Even Marjorie's beloved Captain and General did not share the secret. She had long since vowed within herself, however, some day to tell them everything.

March roared and blustered out the remainder of his days. April smiled and wept her changeable course toward May, yet the secret drawer in Mignon's writing desk still hoarded its unlawful contents. By dint of great personal sacrifice on the part of the Lookouts, the expenses of the day nursery had been thus far met. They were greatly

troubled, however, regarding how they might continue to meet them until such time as Mignon should see fit to deliver unto the club its own.

Meanwhile Jerry Macy still pursued her lonely way. Immediately after Mignon's note to the club had been accepted as a resignation, Muriel Harding boldly accosted Jerry to inform her of it. "Now stop being a goose, Jerry, and come back to the club," had been her somewhat tactless invitation.

Although long since convinced of her goose-like qualities, Jerry was not ready to hear of them from others. She gruffly declined Muriel's invitation with, "I'll wait until I'm good and ready before I come back, if ever I do." A note from Marjorie would undoubtedly have met with a more amiable response. Marjorie longed to write it, yet a certain stubborn pride of her own stayed her hand. She wished Jerry to return to the Lookouts of her own volition. Due also to the fact that Mr. La Salle was still out of town, Marjorie had had no opportunity to seek release from her promise.

On seeking Jerry, Muriel had briefly acquainted her with the details of the occurrence that had led to an acceptance of Mignon's note as a resignation by the Lookouts. Jerry knew nothing, however, of what had transpired later until, by a curious freak of chance, she came into possession of the news. It came about through Muriel Harding's rash promise to Mr. Wendell that the funds of the Lookouts

would be redeposited in his bank within two or three days. Unable to keep her word, she had gained the united consent of the club to offer him a full explanation of the matter. Privately disapproving of Mignon's part in the affair he had unburdened himself of his views to Mr. Macy, an important stockholder in the bank. Knowing the latter's daughter to be president of the club he had briefly suggested to her father a course of action that might prove efficacious. Ignorant of the fact that Jerry had quarreled with the Lookouts, Mr. Macy mentioned to her Mr. Wendell's practical suggestion.

Betraying no outward sign of the astonishment which her father's revelation afforded her, Jerry accepted the advice with the solemnity of an owl, asked a few astute questions and calmly betook herself one fine afternoon in early May to the office of a rising Sanford lawyer, who happened to be a first cousin of hers. When, after an earnest consultation with the young man, she took her leave, her broadly-smiling features registered the signal success of her call.

On the evening of the same day, an alert, self-possessed young man rang the La Salles' doorbell and politely inquired for Mr. La Salle. Informed of his absence he expressed a further wish to see "Miss La Salle," presented a calling card and was ushered into the drawing room. A single glance at the

sinister bit of pasteboard and Mignon began to quake inwardly. Knowing the professional reputation of her caller she could draw but one ominous conclusion. To defy the Lookouts was one thing; to defy the Law another. Undoubtedly he had been engaged by the club to force her to deliver up the cachéd money. Perhaps she would be arrested and tried in court for her crime!

Her sharp face very pale, knees trembling, she entered the drawing room, feeling like a criminal on the way to punishment. Greatly to her surprise her caller greeted her with courteous impersonality. She did not share, however, his suave expression of regret at her father's absence. To her it was an undisguised blessing.

Her fears diminished a trifle as he proceeded to engage her in pleasant conversation which had no bearing on the, to her, dangerous subject. Deciding that he had merely dropped in to pay her father a social call, Mignon recovered her courage and promptly set out to make herself agreeable. Very tactfully he directed the discourse toward himself and his profession. He related several incidents of peculiar cases, carefully avoiding all mention of names, that had come under his jurisdiction. He ended his law reminiscences with the tale of a young man who, having quarreled with his mother, rifled a safe in his mother's room and hid the contents out of pure spite, thus hoping to bring her to his own

terms. Contrary to all expectations his mother promptly had him arrested for burglary, despite his frantic assurances that he had cherished no thought of not returning the money, but had hidden it merely for revenge.

"And—was—he—sent to prison?" Mignon's tones were decidedly shaky.

"No. His mother did not carry it further. She decided that he had learned a lesson and withdrew the charge. It was a very severe lesson, however. He did not relish the idea of being regarded by the public as a thief. His mother felt the publicity to be necessary, I suppose. He had been a sore trial to her. It must have hurt her pride. Still, you know, desperate diseases require desperate remedies."

Shortly after delivering this Parthian shot, the disturbing advocate of the law smilingly took his departure, leaving a thoroughly miserable and frightened girl to digest his remarks at her leisure. It may be said that the tragic tale of the too-vengeful young man was absolutely true. It had been carefully culled from among records in the young lawyer's possession as bearing directly upon Mignon's case.

At the next regular meeting of the Lookouts, held at Harriet's home, the members of that worthy organization received the surprise of their young lives. Deep in anxious conference regarding the ways and

means of raising money to meet their steadily-mounting expenses, they were startled by a loud ringing of the doorbell that caused each mind to revert to another occasion when precisely the same thing had happened.

It was Muriel herself who answered the door. When she reappeared among her companions her pretty face wore a somewhat dazed expression. In one hand she bore an oblong package, the outlines of which suggested a book.

"Girls," she said in an awed voice, "the unbelievable has come to pass. Someone please take this package and open it. I'm simply flabbergasted." Marjorie, springing from her chair to relieve Muriel of it, the latter dropped down on the davenport with a half-hysterical chuckle.

"Oh!" Marjorie uttered a faint cry, as the concealing wrapping torn away, the contents of the package burst upon her amazed eyes. Her exclamation was echoed in concert by the eager on-lookers. Clutched firmly in Marjorie's hands, they beheld a familiar black-covered book that had long been missing. On top of it was a neat pile of bank notes held together by an elastic band. Crowning the notes was a small, gray envelope.

"What—why—it's our money!" almost shouted Daisy Griggs.

A confused outcry followed her loud exclamation as each girl attempted an individual remark.

"Open the envelope! Hurry, Marjorie! I wonder what made her send it back! It's a miracle!"

All this was directed to Marjorie, as she obediently ripped open the envelope. Exploring it for a note, a shower of small change fell from it to the floor. Stooping, she hastily gathered it together. "There is nothing else in the envelope," she said, her lips curving in a whimsical smile. "Susan, you are no longer a treasureless treasurer. Please assume the duties of your office and count this money. As for me, I can't really make it seem true." Turning the money over to Susan, Marjorie dropped into a nearby chair, a prey to mingled emotions.

"What do you suppose happened to Mignon to make her send——" began Muriel wonderingly. A second peal of the doorbell sent her speeding again to the door, her question half-asked. A moment and the alert listeners heard her voice raised in a little ecstatic cry of "Jerry!"

Hearing it, the Lookouts made for the wide doorway of the living room in a body. On the threshold their rush was checked. Her arm about Muriel's waist, Jerry Macy stood surveying them, her round face wreathed in smiles.

"Well, Lookouts, I've come back," she announced sheepishly. "I've been hanging around outside the house for the last hour waiting to see if anything would happen. Of course I wasn't sure,

but I had an idea Mignon would send that money here to-night. I thoughtfully sent her an unsigned typewritten notice stating where the meeting was to be. I see the money's here, all right enough." Her shrewd gaze had singled out the bundle of banknotes on the library table. "I saw the La Salles' chauffeur stop his car at the gate, so I guessed things were O. K."

These remarkable statements were received by a volley of curious, exclamatory questions, all hurled at Jerry in the same moment.

"Jerry," entreated Marjorie, when she could make herself heard, "won't you please take your old place and explain a few things? We can never get to the bottom of this miracle unless you tell us." Stepping forward, she stretched forth two impulsive hands. Jerry's own hands shot out and caught them in a tight clasp. All the pain of separation and joy of reconciliation went into that meeting of hands.

Affectionately escorted by Marjorie to the president's chair, Jerry dropped into it with a sigh. "Maybe it isn't good to be back," she said, a suspicious quaver in her usually matter-of-fact tones. "Now draw up your chairs, children, and I'll tell you the whole terrible tale of the treacherous treasurer and the slippery sleuth. But before I begin it, I want to say right here that I've been every variety of goose that ever happened. I'm only going to hold down the presidential chair until I tell my story:

Then Muriel is going to take it again and I'm going to be just a member of the club."

So saying, Jerry launched forth with an account of her exploits as a sleuth which held her hearers' divided between laughter at her artful methods and pity for the girl who had never learned to rule her own spirit. "That's all," she ended. "Now I'm going to beat it—I mean vacate this chair."

"You mean you're going to sit right where you are," asserted Muriel with decision. "Lookouts," she turned to the little company who were now on their feet to protest against Jerry's avowed intention, "there can never be but one president for us; Jerry, Geraldine Jeremiah Macy!"

And thus in her moment of penitent renunciation, too-hasty but valiant-hearted Jerry received a never-to-be-forgotten lesson in loyalty.

CHAPTER XXVI

HER BETTER SELF

The week following Jerry's return to the Lookouts, together with the restoration of their cachéd money, took on a distinctly festival tone. A round of jolly little merry-makings went on at the various members' homes, on each occasion of which Jerry

was the guest of honor. Her aggravating behavior of the past was completely obliterated by the Lookouts' joy at her return to them.

Quite the contrary, Mignon La Salle was speedily beginning to realize that "the way of the transgressor is hard." It was not remorse for her despicable conduct that had forced this knowledge upon her. The moment that the money, which she had tantalizingly withheld from the club out of spite, was out of her hands, her courage came back with a rush. She had already reached the stage of upbraiding herself for having thus been so easily frightened, when a dire calamity befell her.

Three days after she had dispatched William to Harriet's home with the fateful package, her father returned. Having occasion to enter the First National Bank of Sanford on business, he heard there a tale from its vice-president that sent him hurrying from the bank in wrathful quest of his unmanageable daughter. In taking this step, Mr. Wendell had been actuated by what he believed to be the best of motives. As a close friend of Mr. La Salle, the vice-president had deemed it his duty to inform the Frenchman of the affair. A rigid advocate of the belief that the younger generation was allowed entirely too much liberty, he had not been in sympathy with the delicate consideration the Lookouts had exhibited toward Mignon. He was of the opinion that she should be severely punished, and accordingly

constituted himself as a committee of one to act in the matter.

Completely out of patience with his lawless daughter, Mr. La Salle had left the bank, enraged determination in his eye. He had proceeded directly to Sanford High School, insisting there that Mignon be released from study for the day. With no word of greeting other than a stern, "Wicked, ungrateful girl, I have found you out," he marched her home with him. Once safely in the confines of his own residence, he let loose on her a torrent of recrimination, half English, half French, that reduced her to the lowest depths of terrified humility. At the end of it, he pronounced doom. "You shall go to a convent school at once. You shall not have the honor to graduate in the same class with the excellent young women you have so shamefully treated. In a convent school, all the time you will be watched. Then, perhaps, you will learn that it pays not to do wrong."

In vain Mignon wept, pleaded, promised. This time her father was adamant. He sternly forbade her return to Sanford High School and would hardly allow her to leave the house. He visited Miss Archer, stating gloomily to the surprised principal that due to Mignon's own failings he had decided to remove her from high school and place her in the more strict environment of a convent school. To her kindly proposal that he give his erring daugh-

ter another chance, he made emphatic refusal. "She has defied me one time too often," he declared. "Now she must of a truth be severely punished."

He wrote a note to the Lookout Club, apologizing for his daughter's shortcomings, and he also wrote another, much in the same strain, to Marjorie Dean, thanking her for past kindnesses and releasing her from her promise. In the note to Marjorie he stated his unrelenting resolve regarding Mignon. Though she had small reason to feel sympathy for Mignon, nevertheless Marjorie pitied her whole-heartedly. As she solemnly remarked to her captain, it was very hard on Mignon to be snatched from school almost on the very eve of her graduation.

Meanwhile, Mignon was racking her troubled brain for some means of evading the fate her father had thrust upon her. Thus far she had not dared write Rowena and confess that she had been frightened into returning the Lookouts' money. She had known only too well the weight of her friend's displeasure even in small matters. Rowena would never forgive her for thus having so easily given in. Urged on by the conviction that no one save Rowena could suggest a way out of her present difficulty, Mignon finally sat down and wrote her a most garbled account of her defeat. She represented herself to be the victim of a deep-laid plot and a much-abused person all around. She ended with a vigorous tirade against her father and ap-

pealed desperately to Rowena for help out of her difficulties. Her father was already in communication with the head of the school to which he had decreed she should go, she informed Rowena. "If you are truly my friend," she wrote, "try to think of some way to help me out of this trouble."

By keeping an alert watch on the mail, Mignon managed to lay hands on Rowena's answer to her plea, which arrived three days after the sending of her letter to her boon companion. It arrived at her home during her father's absence and she lost no time in locking herself in her room, there to read it undisturbed. The first two pages consisted entirely of Rowena's brutally frank opinion of her for being so cowardly. The third and fourth, however, held a suggestion that fairly took Mignon's breath. At first she mentally flung it aside as impossible. Considering it further, she became better pleased with it. After a half hour of somber reflection, she decided to adopt it.

Mignon was not the only one, however, who had a problem to consider. Marjorie Dean was also wrestling with a difficulty of her own. Since the receipt of Mr. La Salle's note, she had thought frequently and sorrowfully of wayward Mignon. Several times she had attempted to answer the Frenchman's note, but could think of nothing to say. She did not approve of his plan to cut his daughter off from the graduation she had so nearly won. Still,

she could hardly set down her opinion in a letter to him. After several days of troubled reflection, she decided to go to him and ask him to reconsider his determination.

To her friends she said nothing of this; to her captain she said a great deal. Mrs. Dean made no attempt to dissuade her. "You must fight it out by yourself, Lieutenant," she counseled. "If you feel that Mignon is really worth your good offices, then by all means go to her father. Remember, she has never played fairly with you. You are still in the dark as to what means she employed to estrange poor little Lucy Warner from you."

"I know it," sighed Marjorie. "Still, I feel so sorry for her that I can't bear to stand by and not try to help her. I think I'll go to Mr. La Salle's office after school is over for the day."

In order not to arouse her friends' curiosity, she strolled home from school with them as usual. Stopping merely to salute her captain, she faced about and hurried toward the main street of the little city on which his office was situated. To her deep disappointment she found his office locked. It meant a trip to his residence after dinner that evening. She must lose no further time in obtaining an interview with him, else it might be too late. He had written that Mignon was to be sent away immediately.

When she started out for the office the sky had

looked threatening. Before she reached home it had begun to rain, and by dinner time a heavy downpour had set in that bade fair to keep up steadily all evening. Not to be thus easily disheartened, Marjorie waited until almost eight o'clock, then announced her determination to go at any rate.

"Then I shall go with you," decided her mother. "You shall not go alone to Mignon's house. We will drive in the automobile. There is a poor woman who lives near the La Salles on whom I ought to call. I will stop at her home and wait for you there while you make your plea to Mr. La Salle."

This was highly satisfactory to Marjorie. A few minutes later, prepared to face the storm, Marjorie and her captain had repaired to the Deans' small garage at the back of the house for the automobile, and were soon driving through the rain on their double errand of mercy.

"You needn't bother to take me the rest of the way, Captain," assured Marjorie, as they neared the shabby little house where Mrs. Dean was to make her call. "It's only a block. I'll run fast and hardly get wet. My hat and raincoat will stand the bad weather."

"Suit yourself," smiled her mother as Marjorie skipped lightly out of the car. "Don't be too long, dear. I will wait for you, but try to come back within the half hour."

"Always obey your superior officer." Her hand

to her soft felt hat, Marjorie made jaunty salute. Then she flitted on up the street and was soon lost in the blackness of the night.

Her mind on her errand, she hurried along, paying small attention to the discomfort of the falling rain. The La Salle estate, which occupied half a block, lay just around a corner from the place where she had alighted. Her head bent, she made the turn just in time to collide sharply with a pedestrian who was approaching on a run from the opposite direction. The force of the collision sent a suitcase that the latter was carrying to the sidewalk.

"I beg your pardon," began Marjorie. "Did I——"

"Why don't you look where you're going?" demanded an angry voice, as the owner of the suitcase stooped to recover it.

At sound of the familiar tones, Marjorie cried out: "Mignon La Salle! Why, Mignon, you are the last person I expected to see on such a night." Pausing, she regarded the still stooping girl in pure astonishment. To meet Mignon hurrying along on foot through the rain, minus an umbrella and burdened with a suitcase struck her as being decidedly peculiar.

Mignon straightened up with an angry jerk. "You've made me lose my handbag," she accused furiously. "I let go of it with my suitcase when *you* came blundering along and crashed against me.

You've always brought me bad luck, Marjorie Dean. I wish you'd never came to Sanford to live. I'll miss my train and it will be *your* fault. Don't stand there like a dummy. Help me hunt for my bag. I've got to make my train. Do you hear me?"

Already Marjorie was bending low, her anxious hands groping about on the sidewalk in search of the lost bag. Mignon, too, was hunting frantically for it, keeping up a continuous fire of half-sarcastic, half-lamenting remark.

"Here it is," cried Marjorie, as her searching fingers came in contact with the leather of the bag. "I'm glad I found it and I'm sorry I made you drop it." Privately she was wondering at Mignon's apparent agitation. It was far more intense than her anger.

Both girls straightening up simultaneously, Marjorie caught full sight of Mignon's face under the flickering gleam of a neighboring arc light. It was white and set and her black eyes held a hunted, desperate look. Without a word of thanks she snatched the bag from Marjorie's hand, picked up her suitcase and started on.

Yet in that revealing instant under the arc light a sudden, terrifying apprehension laid hold on Marjorie. Mignon's pale, tense features, her evident haste, the suitcase, her frenzied determination to make the train, the fact that she was rushing

through the rain on foot to the station—all seemed to tally with the dreadful suspicion that gripped Marjorie. Could it be that Mignon was running away from home?

To think was to act with Marjorie. In a flash she was speeding to overtake the fleeing girl, now a few yards ahead of her. Catching up with Mignon, she cried out on impulse, "You mustn't run away from home, Mignon! Please, *please* go back with me! When I met you I was on my way to your house to ask your father if you couldn't stay in Sanford High and graduate with our class."

"Who told *you* I was going to run away from home?" flashed Mignon, whirling fiercely upon Marjorie.

"No one told me," was the steady admission. "It just came to me all of a sudden. If I'm wrong, forgive me. If I'm right, then please don't do it." Marjorie's voice rose beseechingly. "You have everything in the world to make you happy. Your father loves you, even if he *is* angry with you now. No one else will ever take care of you as he has."

"My father *hates* me," contradicted Mignon savagely. "If he really cared for me he could never send me away to be a prisoner in a convent school. Yes, I am going to leave home, and you nor anyone else shall stop me. Everybody hates me and I hate everybody!" The last word ended in a passionate

sob of mingled rage and humiliation. Mignon was now tasting the bitterness of one against whom the world has turned.

"Poor Mignon." Moved by sincere pity, Marjorie laid a comforting hand on the would-be refugee's arm.

That gentle expression of sympathy, accompanied by the tender little caress, stirred into life an emotion hitherto unknown to Mignon's rebellious soul. Assailing her as a climax to the strain of the past few days, it completely unnerved her. Her self-control vanishing she dropped her suitcase and burst into wild weeping. Winding her arms about the sobbing girl, Marjorie tried to soothe her as best she might. Fortunately for them, no passer-by intruded upon the little scene. Only the complaining rain lent its monotonous accompaniment to Mignon's sobs.

"Let us go back to your house, Mignon," proposed Marjorie practically with a view toward bracing up the weeper. "Someone is likely to come along and see us. You will go, won't you?"

"Yes," came the husky reply.

"All right." Making an effort to speak with the utmost cheerfulness, Marjorie loosed her hold on Mignon and picked up the suitcase. "I'll carry it," she said. "It's only a little way to our home. But first, I must stop at that little house over there and tell Captain to wait for me longer. I'd like to have

a talk with you and you know I am to see your father. Is he at home?"

"Yes. In the library. I left the house by the back entrance so that he wouldn't see me. I hid my suitcase outside," confessed Mignon in a low, shamed voice. "I was going to New York to see Rowena. She promised to help me get on the stage. Her uncle is a theatrical manager."

"I'm glad you have changed your mind," was the hearty assertion. Marjorie was thinking that she was not in the least surprised to learn that Rowena Farnham was at the root of Mignon's flight.

"I would never have hidden the money if it hadn't been for her," Mignon continued bitterly. "Still, it's my fault, after all. I shouldn't have listened to her. But this is the end. I'm going to be different, even if my father sends me away to school. I guess I started wrong and somehow could never do right. I deserve to be punished, though. It just breaks my heart when I think of not graduating from Sanford High."

Marjorie listened in wonder. Was it really lawless Mignon who had just spoken so penitently? Could it be that her better self had at last found the light? "You *are* going to graduate from Sanford High," she declared staunchly. "We must go to your father and tell him everything. I'm sure he'll understand."

Mignon sighed at the prospect ahead of her, yet

she made no dissent to Marjorie's plan. She had small faith in her father's clemency, but she had at last taken a step in the right direction and she was resolved to go on. "We might as well go to the front door and ring the bell," she said dejectedly. "I know he'll be terribly angry, but I'll have to stand it."

Mignon's prediction of her father's anger was not an idle one. Of the excitable Latin temperament, his indignation flamed high when the two girls entered the library where he sat quietly reading and Mignon haltingly confessed to him the details of her interrupted flight. His scathing words of rebuke brought on a second flood of tears. Mignon crumpled up in a big chair, a figure of abject misery. It was then that Marjorie took the floor and in her sweet, gracious fashion earnestly pleaded clemency for the weeper.

It was the most difficult task she had ever undertaken to perform. Exasperated beyond measure, Mr. La Salle at first utterly refused to consider her plea. He could not find it within his heart to forgive his daughter. He was bent on punishing her with the utmost severity and her latest defiance of him served to strengthen his determination. Marjorie's repeated assertion that by her confession Mignon had already proved her sincerity of purpose appeared to carry small weight.

"You do not know this ungrateful one as I, her

father, know her," was his incensed retort. "Often she has promised the good behavior, but only promised. Never has she fulfilled the word. How then can she expect that I shall forgive and believe her?"

"But this time Mignon *will* keep her word," returned Marjorie with gentle insistence. "I am sure that if her mother were living she would forgive and believe. No matter what I had done, *my* mother would forgive me. If I were truly sorry she would believe in me, too. You are nearest of all in the world to Mignon. Won't you try to overlook the past and let her come back to the senior class? Whatever else displeases you in her, she has at least been successful in her studies. She stands high in all her classes. She is Professor Fontaine's most brilliant pupil in French. It does seem hard that she should have to give up now what she has so nearly won."

Without realizing it, Marjorie had advanced a particularly effective argument. Mignon's high standing in her various classes during her high school career had always afforded her father signal pleasure. Thus reminded, paternal pride awoke and struggled against anger. Marjorie's reference to Mignon's mother had also touched him deeply.

Following her earnest little speech, a brief interval of silence ensued, during which Mr. La Salle stared gloomily at his weeping daughter. Moved by a sudden rush of pity for his motherless girl, he

walked over to her and rested a forgiving hand on her diminished head. Very gently he addressed her in his native tongue. Marjorie felt a rush of unbidden tears rise to her own eyes, when the next instant she became witness to a tender reconciliation which she never forgot.

It was nearer two hours than one before she prepared to say good night to the two for whom she had done so much. Brought at last to a state of sympathetic understanding such as they had never before known, father and daughter were loath to part from this sincere, lovely young girl. To Mr. La Salle's proposal to see her safely to the house where her mother awaited her, Marjorie made gracious refusal. She was anxious to get away by herself. The whole affair had been extremely nerve-racking and she longed for the bracing atmosphere of the outdoors as an antidote to the strain she had undergone.

She was visited by a feeling of intense impatience when, stepping into the hall, accompanied by Mignon and her father, the former humbly asked her to delay her departure for a moment. Leaving her, Mignon sped up the front stairs, returning almost instantly. Announcing to her father her wish to go with Marjorie as far as the gate, the now smiling man saw his guest as far as the veranda and retired into the house.

"I have something to give you," began Mignon, as

they started down the walk. "It's—that——" she faltered briefly "——that letter Lucy Warner wrote you. I found it in the locker room. I saw it fall out of your blouse—and—I—took it—and—read it. I know it was wrong. Then I kept it. I was angry—because you wouldn't tell me about you and Lucy that day at Miss Archer's. I—made—Lucy think you *had* told me about it. She wouldn't believe it, so I said, 'What about the Observer?' She thought I knew something I didn't know at all. I had no idea what 'the Observer' meant. To-morrow I shall go to her and tell her so," she continued bravely. "I'm sorry for all the hateful things I've done to you and said about you. You are the finest, truest girl in the whole world, Marjorie Dean. You've done something for me to-night that I'll remember and be grateful to you for as long as I live. There's not much left of my senior year but I am going to try to make my last days in Sanford High count. Some day I hope I can prove to you that I am worthy of your friendship. But not yet." With this she shoved the troublesome letter into Marjorie's limp hand.

Bereft for the moment of speech, Marjorie clutched the letter, wondering again whether she were actually awake, or living in a queer dream. Mignon's revelation had laid the last ghost. She had untied the final knot in the tangle of her own making. More, she had given the best possible

proof of sincere repentance. "Mignon," it was now Marjorie's voice that trembled, "you've already proved yourself my friend. I'm glad for your sake and Lucy's and mine that you were so brave as to tell me about the letter and return it to me. All I can say is: Let us forget and be friends."

CHAPTER XXVII

COMMENCEMENT

The next morning Miss Archer held a memorable interview in her private office with Mignon La Salle. It was evidently a satisfactory talk. When it terminated, the hands of teacher and pupil met in an understanding clasp. On leaving the inner office, Mignon halted at Lucy Warner's desk, there to perform a difficult act of restitution.

Not gifted with Marjorie Dean's divine power of forgiveness, Lucy was filled with righteous wrath against Mignon. Added to the anger Mignon's confession aroused was remorse for her unbelief in Marjorie. She vowed bitterly that she would never forgive Mignon and she meant it. It was not until she had made humble amend to Marjorie for her own sins and received gracious pardon, that her better nature began to stir. Conscience whispering to her that as she had freely re-

ceived so should she freely give, she went to Mignon and retracted her harsh vow. Thus Marjorie Dean's beneficient influence again made itself felt.

Mignon's return to school occasioned much speculation on the part of her class mates. As only the Lookouts knew the true reason of her brief withdrawal from Sanford High, it had been a subject for fruitful cogitation among the other seniors. Not even the Lookouts knew, with one exception, the reason for Mignon's return. Among themselves they laid it to her ability to manage her father. Marjorie, the one exception, kept her own secret. What took place on a certain rainy evening remained locked forever within her heart. Besides the three intimately interested parties to the little drama, only one other shared the secret. From her captain she kept back nothing.

To Marjorie the remaining days of May passed with a pleasant uneventfulness, which she mentally likened to the welcome calm that inevitably succeeds a storm. She was filled with a quiet sense of exultation. With the ending of her senior year had come peace. Mignon's miraculous change of heart had resulted in removing from the senior class the last element of discord. The seniors were now indeed one heart, one soul, marching on, shoulder to shoulder, toward the end of their high school course.

She had but one regret. She earnestly wished

that the new Mignon might again take her place among the Lookouts. The fulfilling of this desire, however, would entail an amount of explanation which she did not feel privileged to make. She and Mignon discussed the painful subject at length, both agreeing sadly that matters must remain as they were. Having sown chaff with a liberal hand, this unhappy reminder of her treacherous conduct was in itself a part of the bitter harvest Mignon was obliged to reap. As she had meted it out to others, so it had been measured back to her. With the belated realization, however, had come resigned acceptance. Mignon's feet were at last planted firmly in the straight path.

The arrival of rose-decked June marked the beginning of the pleasant flurry which always attends the sweet girl graduate's preparations for Commencement. Strolling home from school each afternoon in the warm sunshine of early summer, Marjorie and her devoted companions brimmed with eager conversation relating to the momentous occasion. With Commencement exercises set for the morning of June twenty-second, they were divided between anticipation of the event and regret at saying good-bye to Sanford High.

The day nursery was also an important topic of discussion. Although their successors had been already chosen, they were not expected to take up their new responsibilities until school re-opened in

the fall. The original Lookouts had decided to carry on the work as best they could through the summer. Vacation time would see a part of their number absent from Sanford during one or more of the summer months. In consequence the daily pilgrimages to the nursery at which they had taken turns could not continue. Each girl had agreed, however, to go there as often as possible to assist the two women in charge, who were permanently attached to the place.

Their chief anxiety for the welfare of the little home they had founded related to money matters. The present prosperous state of the Lookouts' treasury would keep the enterprise in a flourishing condition until well into the next year. After that they could only hope that their successors would find ways and means to continue the good work. They had solemnly pledged themselves to pay a year's dues in advance into the treasury before leaving home in the autumn to continue their education in the various colleges of their choice. They were also resolved to get together during the next Christmas vacation and devise some sort of entertainment which their town folks would patronize. This much at least they could offer to the cause they had so generously espoused.

Lingering at the Macys' gate on the way from school one afternoon to discuss this very important subject, Jerry remarked confidentially: "I almost

forgot to tell you a real piece of news. My father told me about it this noon. Someone, he wouldn't say who, has offered Sanford High a scholarship to Hamilton College. The name of the giver is to be announced on Commencement morning with the winner's name. We'll probably hear about it at chapel to-morrow morning. I thought you'd like to know beforehand. It's a splendid chance for Lucy Warner or Veronica, for that matter. They're both brilliant students. Either is likely to win it."

"Isn't that wonderful?" glowed Marjorie. "I don't know which of the two I'd rather see win it. Lucy's heart is set on going to college. I've never heard Ronny say anything about it. I suppose she would like to go on with her education, though."

"Of course you've never heard her say a word about it," retorted Jerry, "or about anything else. She's beyond me. I said when I first met her that I was going to find out the whys and wherefores of her. I've never found out a thing. Where she learned to dance so beautifully, where those two expensive dancing dresses came from, why she works for her board and looks like a princess, are mysteries I can't ferret out. She's a perfect dear and has helped the Lookouts a lot, but she's the great enigma, just the same."

"It's rather queer about her," mused Marjorie. "I used to think that she'd some day explain a few things. Perhaps there's really nothing mysterious

to explain. She is probably a natural dancer. Miss Archer must have given her those two beautiful dresses and she was born with the air of a princess."

"That's not the answer," disagreed Jerry with a shake of her head. "I guess it's the only one we'll ever get, though, so why worry about it? I'm a baffled sleuth and I might as well own up to it. I can't truthfully say now that I know everything about everybody."

Jerry's admitted mystification regarding Veronica Browning deepened considerably. When the club met at Marjorie's home the next evening, the latter quietly assured her that she had no intention to try for the scholarship. The announcement of it and the details of the test examinations to be held to determine the winner, having been publicly made that very morning, it was freely discussed at the meeting. Of the Lookouts, it appeared that Lucy Warner was the only one to try for it. Several members of the senior class, outside the club, had also entered the lists.

The parting of the ways so near, the sextette of girls who had emerged from their freshman year, a devoted band, clung fondly to one another. Not even the glories of approaching Commencement and the consciousness of work well done could drive away the thought that their school days together would soon be a thing of the past. Commencement

would witness a break in the fond little circle. The next fall Marjorie, Jerry and Muriel were to take up their new life at Hamilton College. Susan and Irma expected to enter Wellesley College, while Constance Stevens would begin her training for grand opera in New York City. It would indeed be a parting of the ways.

Although Harriet Delaney had not been of their original number, she was equally dear. It was a source of consolation to Marjorie that Harriet was also bound for the same conservatory as Constance. She reflected that, with Hamilton College not very far from New York, she would be always in direct touch with both girls. It was conceded by all that they would miss Veronica sorely. Several times Marjorie had questioned her regarding her future plans, only to receive evasive replies that discouraged further inquiry.

So while June laughed its fragrant, blossoming way toward the twenty-second of the month, the sextette of sworn friends became doubly endeared to one another as they took their last walks together to and from school. As Lookouts they would continue to meet regularly until their vacation flittings began, but as schoolmates their days were numbered. Having disposed of their final tests in January, they were free of the bugbear of examinations. The week preceding Commencement Day took on a singularly social tone. Jerry and Hal

gave their long postponed dance. Constance gave an informal hop at Gray Gables. Muriel sent out invitations for a lawn party, and Marjorie entertained the Lookouts at a Saturday luncheon.

Commencement Day dawned with a cloudless blue sky and a lavish display of sunshine. More than one pair of anxious feet pattered to the window before seven o'clock that morning to view the weather prospects. To the members of the senior class it was thus far the most eventful day in their short lives. They considered it quite their due that Nature should put on her most radiantly smiling face in their honor.

Awake with dawn, Marjorie had slipped on a soft, pink negligee and curled herself up on her window seat for a quiet little session with herself. A pensive wistfulness lay in her brown eyes as she gazed dreamily out at the beauty of the sunlit morning. Her mind harked back to her first days at Sanford High School. Again she saw herself a timid outlander, entering the great study hall for the first time. It seemed ages ago. How quickly her four years at high school had sped! There had certainly been plenty of vicissitudes. Compared to the joys that had been hers, they paled to insignificance. She marveled that she should have been so abundantly blessed. Face to face with the end of her course, she could only regret that she had not done more to deserve these benefits. Un-

touched by false pride or vanity, she could not know how great a power for good she had been. Very humbly she bowed her head in a silent prayer of thankfulness to the Divine Source from whence all blessings flowed.

At breakfast, however, this retrospective mood was temporarily banished by her General's teasing sallies. Later, as she donned her exquisite graduation gown of white chiffon, reverence again flowed over her like a mantle. When at ten o'clock her father assisted her into the waiting limousine with much ridiculous ceremony, she presented an unusually lovely vision of radiant girlhood. Only the faint brooding light in her eyes gave sign of the deeper emotion that lay behind them.

The Commencement exercises were to be held in Sanford Hall, a good-sized auditorium on an upper floor of the high school building. The anteroom was to be used as a meeting place for the graduates. From there they were to march, two by two, into the main auditorium. The first three rows of seats at the left of the large room, roped in by broad white ribbon, had been reserved for them. In contradistinction to the custom of many high schools, none of the graduates were to read essays. As valedictorian, Lucy Warner was the only one of them to be publicly heard. The pastor of the First Episcopal Church of Sanford was to address the graduates. The President of the Board of Edu-

cation and Miss Archer were also to make short addresses. To the former belonged the privilege of announcing the winner of the scholarship.

Marjorie's entrance into the anteroom was the signal for a soft murmur of admiration on the part of a group of white-gowned, flower-laden girls gathered in a corner of the rendezvous. To her adoring friends she had never before looked quite so utterly lovely. The purity of her dainty gown served to enhance the beauty of her sparkling brown eyes and sweetly serious features. A sheaf of long-stemmed white roses, which she carried, was the last touch needed to complete the picture.

"You're the ideal girl graduate, Marjorie," greeted Jerry, who had come forward to meet her. "I look nice, the girls there look nicer, but you look nicest. Hal will be all puffed up with pride when he sees you with his roses. Connie is carrying the ones Laurie sent her."

"It was thoughtful in Hal to send them." Marjorie's color heightened. "They are exquisite. I wanted him to know how much I appreciated them. Someone was nice to you, too, Jerry," she added slyly, noting the huge bouquet of pink roses on Jerry's plump arm.

It was Jerry who now flushed. "I have Danny Seabrooke to thank for them," she confided. "Don't you dare tell the girls, though."

Before she could make laughing promise of se-

crecy, they had reached the others. For the next five minutes a lively exchange of conversation went on among the bevy of graduates, now clustered around Marjorie. She then left them to pay her admiring respects to Mignon La Salle, who had just arrived. Her sharp features animated by a smile of genuine friendliness, Mignon had never appeared to better advantage. Her white lingerie gown, a marvel of expensive simplicity, Marjorie thought the most becoming frock she had ever seen Mignon wear.

Pausing to clasp hands and chat with her for a moment, Marjorie passed on to speak to Lucy Warner, a dignified little figure in a simple white organdie frock. As valedictorian, Lucy was living in a maze of proud happiness. From one to another of her classmates, Marjorie wandered, leaving behind her an atmosphere of good will, created by her lovable personality. In all her class there was not one who did not wish her well.

Seated at last in Sanford Hall between Jerry and Constance, she made an alarming discovery. Glancing up and down the rows of white-clad girls, she noted that Veronica Browning was absent. What had happened to keep Ronny away, she wondered in perplexity. The question repeated itself in her brain as she tried to fix her mind on the clergyman's address.

Her eyes constantly sought the door nearest the

graduates' section in the hope of seeing the missing girl appear. She wondered if her friends had also made the same belated discovery. Of a sudden she drew a sharp breath. A slender, graceful girl had entered the hall and was noiselessly making her way to the ribboned enclosure. Was this beautiful newcomer, in the ravishing white lace frock, humble Veronica Browning? A gasping sigh from Jerry announced the stout girl's patent amazement at the metamorphosis. The sigh was followed by an emphatic jab from Jerry's elbow which spoke volumes. Marjorie had but to glance about her to note equal signs of mental perturbation on the part of her classmates as Veronica slipped into a vacant seat in the third row.

The end of the exercises, however, was destined to furnish them with an even greater surprise. Eagerly alert to hear the name of the winner of the scholarship, the announcement that Lucy Warner had gained it was not in itself a matter of astonishment. It was the speaker's next remark that furnished the surprise.

"I take great pleasure in announcing that this scholarship, the first to be presented to Sanford High School, is the gift of Miss Veronica Browning Lynne. Miss Lynne wishes it to be known hereafter as the 'Marjorie Dean Scholarship,' a tribute of her esteem for Miss Marjorie Dean," was the bombshell that burst on the senior class.

The thunder of applause that swept the auditorium drowned his further speech. Down among the graduates Marjorie Dean presented a petrified figure of amazement. Her brown eyes blinded by tears, she heard dimly the vigorous acclamation of her schoolmates and townspeople. Dimly she was aware that Jerry was holding one of her hands; Constance the other. With a little sob, she freed them, hiding her burning cheeks behind them. Nor did she have the courage to remove them until the clamor died away. Again she heard the speaker's voice.

"I have also another announcement to make which, while not strictly related to high school matterns, pertains to a number of the graduates who are members of the senior class sorority, 'The Lookout Club.' During the short period in which this sorority has been in existence it has accomplished much good. Mr. Victor La Salle, one of our most prominent Sanford citizens, wishes me to state that in token of his kindly regard for Miss Marjorie Dean, a member of the club, he wishes to make an endowment of one thousand dollars a year to be used by the Lookout Club as a help in carrying on their work.

"I may also add that Miss Dean is to be congratulated on having attained to so high a position of regard in the estimation of the donors."

Marjorie could never quite remember the ending

of the Commencement exercises. As in a dream she walked up on the stage with her class to receive her diploma to the tune of fresh and infinitely embarrassing applause. The unexpected had robbed her of coherent thought. Three words alone sang in her bewildered brain, "Veronica Browning Lynne."

The exercises ended, she moved mechanically off the stage in the line of graduates, headed toward the anteroom. Exiting from stage into the side room, she became immediately the center of a buzzing throng of highly excited girls.

"Here she is, Marjorie," shrieked Jerry, as she laid gentle hold on Veronica and shoved her into Marjorie's outstretched arms.

"Ronny, who are you?" was all Marjorie could say as she folded Miss Archer's "servant girl" in her arms.

For answer Veronica merely laughed. Raising her clear voice she said, "Girls, I have something to say to you. I am a wicked impostor. I hope you'll all forgive me for deceiving you so long. I did so for purely personal reasons. I am really not so very poverty-stricken and I was never a servant of Miss Archer's. She is my god-mother. I came to visit her, but decided to stay in Sanford and go to high school. I played at being a servant just for fun. That's all."

It was indeed "all" so far as Veronica wished

the majority of her classmates to know. That afternoon, however, Marjorie, Jerry and Constance gathered in Miss Archer's living room to hear the more intimate details of the affair from Veronica's lips.

"I couldn't explain things to the others," she began. "I wish only you three to know the rest. It was Mignon who put the servant idea in my head. When you and she called on my god-mother that day, Marjorie, I was amused to find that she thought me a maid. I was merely helping God-mother straighten the house while Hulda was away. It came to me in a flash that it would be fun to pretend poverty and see what happened. So I made God-mother promise to keep quiet about the real me. I'm glad now that I did. It has shown me how splendid girls can be. I love the Lookouts, every one, but I know Jerry and Connie won't feel hurt if I say I love Marjorie best of all.

"Before I came here, I went to a select boarding school near New York City. I didn't care much for it and when God-mother visited us last summer she urged me to try a year of high school for a change. That's how I happened to come here. Only one person in Sanford found me out, your friend Laurie Armitage. It happened that he had seen me do that Dance of the Night at an open air performance which we gave for charity at the boarding school. The moment he saw me in that black

robe he recognized me. I made him promise to keep my secret. As for my dancing, I've always loved to dance. My mother, who died years ago, was a professional dancer. My father is Alfred Lynne, who owns so many fruit ranches in California. Now have I explained myself satisfactorily?"

"You have." Jerry drew a long breath. "I must say you kept your secret well. I'll tell you frankly, I tried my hardest to find out who you really were. I never believed you were what you pretended to be. I can't get over it."

"Nor I," echoed Marjorie. To herself she was thinking that she now knew who had sent Lucy Warner the ten dollars. Irrelevantly she added: "You've done a great deal for Lucy Warner, Ronny, and for Sanford High School. I didn't deserve the honor of having the scholarship named for me. I hardly know how to thank you for such a wonderful thing."

"I offered the scholarship especially for Lucy," admitted Veronica. "I have always felt sorry for her. I knew she wanted to go to college, and I thought she would win it. She is a very stubborn but very brilliant girl. As for you, Marjorie, you deserve the best that life can give you. It's eminently fitting that your name should be perpetuated in Sanford High School. Isn't it, girls?"

Veronica's question elicited an affectionate response from Jerry and Constance that caused Mar-

jorie's hand to cover her ears in playful protest against such lavish appreciation of herself.

"You are hopeless, all of you," she declared, a slight tremble in her clear tones. "You forget that I'm just plain Lieutenant Dean with a long hike ahead of me through the Country of College. As a freshman at Hamilton I'll be a very insignificant person. Whatever I've been or tried to be in Sanford won't count there. But your faith in me will count for a great deal. Trying to live up to it will keep me out of mischief. Then I can't help but be a good soldier."

THE END

Marjorie Dean High School Series

BY PAULINE LESTER

Author of the Famous Marjorie Dean College Series

These are clean, wholesome stories that will be of great interest to all girls of high school age.

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR

MARJORIE DEAN, HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK

Marjorie Dean College Series

BY PAULINE LESTER.

Author of the Famous Marjorie Dean High School Series.

Those who have read the Marjorie Dean High School Series will be eager to read this new series, as Marjorie Dean continues to be the heroine in these stories.

All Clothbound. Copyright Titles.

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH.

MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE FRESHMAN

MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE

MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE JUNIOR

MARJORIE DEAN, COLLEGE SENIOR

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers.

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 East 23rd Street, New York

The Girl Scouts Series

BY EDITH LAVELL

A new copyright series of Girl Scouts stories by an author of wide experience in Scouts' craft, as Director of Girl Scouts of Philadelphia.

Clothbound, with Attractive Color Designs.

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH.

THE GIRL SCOUTS AT MISS ALLENS SCHOOL

THE GIRL SCOUTS AT CAMP

THE GIRL SCOUTS' GOOD TURN

THE GIRL SCOUTS' CANOE TRIP

THE GIRL SCOUTS' RIVALS

THE GIRL SCOUTS ON THE RANCH

THE GIRL SCOUTS' VACATION ADVENTURES

THE GIRL SCOUTS' MOTOR TRIP

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK

The Camp Fire Girls Series

By HILDEGARD G. FREY

A Series of Outdoor Stories for Girls 12 to 16 Years.

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS IN THE MAINE WOODS; or, The Winnebagos go Camping.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS AT SCHOOL; or, The Wohelo Weavers.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS AT ONOWAY HOUSE; or, The Magic Garden.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS GO MOTORING; or, Along the Road That Leads the Way.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS' LARKS AND PRANKS; or, The House of the Open Door.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON ELLEN'S ISLE; or, The Trail of the Seven Cedars.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS ON THE OPEN ROAD; or, Glorify Work.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS DO THEIR BIT; or, Over the Top with the Winnebagos.

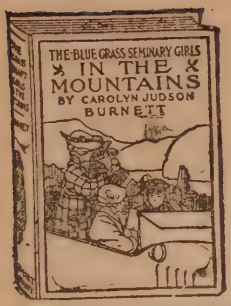
THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS SOLVE A MYSTERY; or, The Christmas Adventure at Carver House.

THE CAMP FIRE GIRLS AT CAMP KEEWAYDIN; or, Down Paddles.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Blue Grass Seminary Girls Series

BY CAROLYN JUDSON BURNETT

For Girls 12 to 16 Years

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

Splendid stories of the Adventures of a Group of Charming Girls.

THE BLUE GRASS SEMINARY GIRLS' VACATION ADVENTURES; or, Shirley Willing to the Rescue.

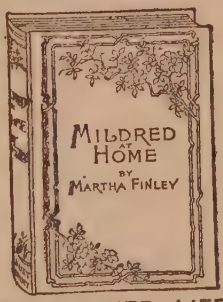
THE BLUE GRASS SEMINARY GIRLS' CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS; or, A Four Weeks' Tour with the Glee Club.

THE BLUE GRASS SEMINARY GIRLS IN THE MOUNTAINS; or, Shirley Willing on a Mission of Peace.

THE BLUE GRASS SEMINARY GIRLS ON THE WATER; or, Exciting Adventures on a Summerer's Cruise Through the Panama Canal.

The Mildred Series

BY MARTHA FINLEY



For Girls 12 to 16 Years.

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

A Companion Series to the famous "Elsie" books by the same author.

MILDRED KEITH

MILDRED AT ROSELAND

MILDRED AND ELSIE

MILDRED'S MARRIED LIFE

MILDRED AT HOME

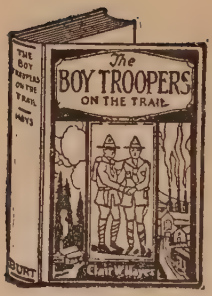
MILDRED'S BOYS AND GIRLS

MILDRED'S NEW DAUGHTER

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Boy Troopers Series

BY CLAIR W. HAYES

Author of the Famous "Boy Allies" Series.

The adventures of two boys with the Pennsylvania State Police.

All Copyrighted Titles.

Cloth Bound, with Attractive Cover Designs.

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH.

THE BOY TROOPERS ON THE TRAIL

THE BOY TROOPERS IN THE NORTHWEST

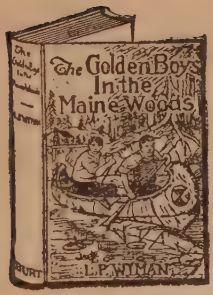
THE BOY TROOPERS ON STRIKE DUTY

THE BOY TROOPERS AMONG THE WILD MOUNTAINEERS

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers.

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 East 23rd Street, New York



The Golden Boys Series

BY L. P. WYMAN, PH.D.

Dean of Pennsylvania Military College.

A new series of instructive copyright stories for boys of High School Age.

Handsome Cloth Binding.

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH.

THE GOLDEN BOYS AND THEIR NEW ELECTRIC CELL

THE GOLDEN BOYS AT THE FORTRESS

THE GOLDEN BOYS IN THE MAINE WOODS

THE GOLDEN BOYS WITH THE LUMBER JACKS

THE GOLDEN BOYS RESCUED BY RADIO

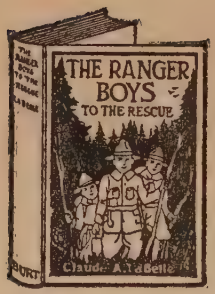
THE GOLDEN BOYS ALONG THE RIVER ALLAGASH

THE GOLDEN BOYS AT THE HAUNTED CAMP

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Ranger Boys Series

BY CLAUDE H. LA BELLE

A new series of copyright titles telling of the adventures of three boys with the Forest Rangers in the state of Maine.

Handsome Cloth Binding.

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH.

THE RANGER BOYS TO THE RESCUE

THE RANGER BOYS FIND THE HERMIT

THE RANGER BOYS AND THE BORDER SMUGGLERS

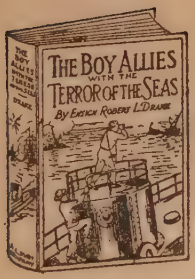
THE RANGER BOYS OUTWIT THE TIMBER THIEVES

THE RANGER BOYS AND THEIR REWARD

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers.

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 East 23rd Street, New York



The Boy Allies

(Registered in the United States Patent Office)

With the Navy

BY

ENSIGN ROBERT L. DRAKE

For Boys 12 to 16 Years.

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

Frank Chadwick and Jack Templeton, young American lads, meet each other in an unusual way soon after the declaration of war. Circumstances place them on board the British cruiser, "The Sylph," and from there on, they share adventures with the sailors of the Allies. Ensign Robert L. Drake, the author, is an experienced naval officer, and he describes admirably the many exciting adventures of the two boys.

THE BOY ALLIES ON THE NORTH SEA PATROL; or, Striking the First Blow at the German Fleet.

THE BOY ALLIES UNDER TWO FLAGS; or, Sweeping the Enemy from the Sea.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE FLYING SQUADRON; or, The Naval Raiders of the Great War.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE TERROR OF THE SEA; or, The Last Shot of Submarine D-16.

THE BOY ALLIES UNDER THE SEA; or, The Vanishing Submarine.

THE BOY ALLIES IN THE BALTIC; or, Through Fields of Ice to Aid the Czar.

THE BOY ALLIES AT JUTLND; or, The Greatest Naval Battle of History.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH UNCLE SAM'S CRUISERS; or, Convoying the American Army Across the Atlantic.

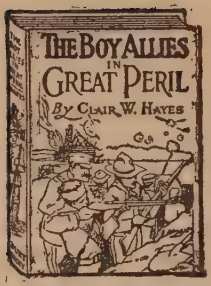
THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE SUBMARINE D-32; or, The Fall of the Russian Empire.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE VICTORIOUS FLEETS; or, The Fall of the German Navy.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Boy Allies

(Registered in the United States Patent Office)

With the Army

BY CLAIR W. HAYES

For Boys 12 to 16 Years.

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

In this series we follow the fortunes of two American lads unable to leave Europe after war is declared. They meet the soldiers of the Allies, and decide to cast their lot with them. Their experiences and escapes are many, and furnish plenty of good, healthy action that every boy loves.

THE BOY ALLIES AT LIEGE; or, Through Lines of Steel.

THE BOY ALLIES ON THE FIRING LINE; or, Twelve Days Battle Along the Marne.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH THE COSSACKS; or, A Wild Dash Over the Carpathians.

THE BOY ALLIES IN THE TRENCHES; or, Midst Shot and Shell Along the Aisne.

THE BOY ALLIES IN GREAT PERIL; or, With the Italian Army in the Alps.

THE BOY ALLIES IN THE BALKAN CAMPAIGN; or, The Struggle to Save a Nation.

THE BOY ALLIES ON THE SOMME; or, Courage and Bravery Rewarded.

THE BOY ALLIES AT VERDUN; or, Saving France from the Enemy.

THE BOY ALLIES UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES; or, Leading the American Troops to the Firing Line.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH HAIG IN FLANDERS; or, The Fighting Canadians of Vimy Ridge.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH PERSHING IN FRANCE; or, Over the Top at Chateau Thierry.

THE BOY ALIES WITH THE GREAT ADVANCE; or, Driving the Enemy Through France and Belgium.

THE BOY ALLIES WITH MARSHAL FOCH; or. The Closing Days of the Great World War.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK

The Boy Scouts Series

BY HERBERT CARTER

For Boys 12 to 16 Years

All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles

PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

New Stories of Camp Life

THE BOY SCOUTS' FIRST CAMPFIRE; or, Scouting with the Silver Fox Patrol.

THE BOY SCOUTS IN THE BLUE RIDGE; or, Marooned Among the Moonshiners.

THE BOY SCOUTS ON THE TRAIL; or, Scouting through the Big Game Country.

THE BOY SCOUTS IN THE MAINE WOODS; or, The New Test for the Silver Fox Patrol.

THE BOY SCOUTS THROUGH THE BIG TIMBER; or, The Search for the Lost Tenderfoot.

THE BOY SCOUTS IN THE ROCKIES; or, The Secret of the Hidden Silver Mine.

THE BOY SCOUTS ON STURGEON ISLAND; or, Marooned Among the Game-Fish Poachers.

THE BOY SCOUTS DOWN IN DIXIE; or, The Strange Secret of Alligator Swamp.

THE BOY SCOUTS AT THE BATTLE OF SARATOGA; A story of Burgoyne's Defeat in 1777.

THE BOY SCOUTS ALONG THE SUSQUEHANNA; or, The Silver Fox Patrol Caught in a Flood.

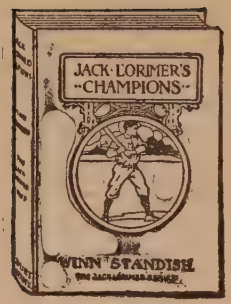
THE BOY SCOUTS ON WAR TRAILS IN BELGIUM; or, Caught Between Hostile Armies.

THE BOY SCOUTS AFOOT IN FRANCE; or, With The Red Cross Corps at the Marne.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK



The Jack Lorimer Series

BY WINN STANDISH

For Boys 12 to 16 Years.
All Cloth Bound Copyright Titles
PRICE, 65 CENTS EACH

CAPTAIN JACK LORIMER; or, The Young Athlete of Millvale High.

Jack Lorimer is a fine example of the all-around American high-school boys. His fondness for clean, honest sport of all kinds will strike a chord of sympathy among athletic youths.

JACK LORIMER'S CHAMPIONS; or, Sports on Land and Lake.

There is a lively story woven in with the athletic achievements, which are all right, since the book has been O. K'd. by Chadwick, the Nestor of American Sporting journalism.

JACK LORIMER'S HOLIDAYS; or, Millvale High in Camp.

It would be well not to put this book into a boy's hands until the chores are finished, otherwise they might be neglected.

JACK LORIMER'S SUBSTITUTE; or, The Acting Captain of the Team.

On the sporting side, this book takes up football, wrestling, and tobogganing. There is a good deal of fun in this book and plenty of action.

JACK LORIMER, FRESHMAN; or, From Millvale High to Exmouth.

Jack and some friends he makes crowd innumerable happenings into an exciting freshman year at one of the leading Eastern colleges. The book is typical of the American college boy's life, and there is a lively story, interwoven with feats on the gridiron, hockey, basketball and other clean honest sports for which Jack Lorimer stands.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the Publishers

A. L. BURT COMPANY

114-120 EAST 23rd STREET NEW YORK

The Golden Rule